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THE

BOY PIONEER.

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BY EDWARD S. ELLIS.

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THE

BOY PIONEER.

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# THE BOY PIONEER

## CHAPTER I.

### THE PIONEERS—THE VOYAGE DOWN THE OHIO—A DEER—THE CAMP FIRE.

Near the beginning of the present century, a large flat-boat, containing several families and their effects, floated down the Ohio river, until it reached a small town on the Ohio shore, when it was worked to land, and made fast. The families immediately disembarked, and it required but a short time for the boat to be emptied entirely of its contents. The clumsy structure was then carefully taken apart, as its timber was very valuable, and appropriated piecemeal among the several owners.

The little town, which was the destination of the party, numbered less than a score of rude, unsightly cabins, built with little regard to architectural effect, but with a sharp eye to the power of storm, and the probability of danger. They stood near the edge of the river, in two rows, facing each other so that there was some semblance of a street; and a land speculator of the present day would have seen it at once that here was a city in embryo, one which, indeed, has since become one of the most enterprising and flourishing in the West.

Among those who came down on the flat-boat, was Mr. Lawrence Bingham, his wife and his boy, then about twelve years of age. They were natives of Pennsylvania, where Mr. Bingham had been a man of considerable means; but through some unfortunate speculation, he lost nearly all that he possessed, excepting his stout heart, and uncompromising



energy. He was still in the prime of life ; and, as he cast about him for something for his hands to do, he was approached by a neighbor who was making preparations to emigrate to Ohio, which territory, with the adjoining one of Kentucky, was then drawing hundreds of emigrants from the Eastern States. A short consultation with his wife followed his proffer, and the result was that when, a week later, the flat-boat began its descent of the Ohio, it carried the family of Mr. Bingham, and the sum of their worldly possessions.

The little town, or settlement, which we will call Riverton, was less than a dozen years old. Its germ was a small block-house, erected on the spot, some years before General Wayne's celebrated victory over the confederation of Indians. The commandant of the garrison, being pleased with the location, and seeing the great future before the West, brought his family to the place, as soon as the treaty of Greenville was signed. He was followed by several others, until by successive accretions the settlement came to its present size.

A considerable space was cleared from the woods which surrounded Riverton, until the settler had a tract, numbering a great many acres, under cultivation. It was a gigantic task to tear up the unsightly stumps, which, with their prong-like attachments, may be said to have been the teeth of the ground, that required a prodigious drawing to extract from their setting ; but, the settlers were stout-hearted and stout-limbed, and this was only a portion of the work they expected to do when they came to the West. What the fire could not do, their wills could, and so acre after acre was added to the tillable land ; and, as soon as added, was put under cultivation.

The virgin soil of our country is of the richest description. All it asks is that the tiny seed may be placed in its bosom ; it instantly embraces it, and nourishing, warming and feeding it, it pours its inexhaustible fertility into its being, until it bursts with repletion. Then the juices hasten toward the tender roots ; and, as the little feelers of the latter go blindly seeking through the dark earth for nourish-



ment, they find themselves encased in it. The plant shoots upward with amazing rapidity, and refreshed by the dews and rain of heaven, the atom of seed placed into the earth, comes back to the sower sixty and a hundred fold.

The soil once cleared needed only a tithe of the attention now required; and so the goodly and luxuriant crops filled the clearing, and Riverton was prosperous from the start.

Old Colonel Ringgold, who was a grizzly campaigner of the Revolution, and who had had charge of the block-house ever since it was erected, still kept it in good repair, and he always saw that plenty of provisions and ammunition were stored within it, for, although the Treaty of Greenville had been signed a long time before, he was one of those who had very little faith in such things, and he after warned his people that it was probable that some day, when least expected, the red men of the woods would swoop down and then woe to all if the block-house was not found reliable.

But many a summer and winter came, and Colonel Ringgold's hair and patriarchal beard grew white, but no hostile Indians rushed from the woods upon the devoted settlement. The fields of corn waned in the sunlight, and the soft summer wind rustled through the trees, as they seemed to bend their heads for the cool zephyrs to play among the luxuriant locks. The broad clearing crept farther and farther, eating more and more of the wood, as a vast city absorb and swallows up the surrounding villages, and often the crack of the rifle awoke the echoes among the forest; but it was the huntsman who did it. For a dozen years after the first cabin of Riverton was put up, the place never heard a hostile shot.

The clear ring of the woodman's axe, or the sharp report of his gun, or his blithesome song, as he plied his work were the sounds which awoke the stillness around the settlement. Now and then the red men came across the river in their canoes, or strode forth from the forest across the clearing; but they came with signs of peace, and offered no harm. They were received in a kindly spirit and treated as friends as long as they chose to remain. No doubt, is



many of their dark hearts there lurked the deepest enmity toward these intruders upon the hunting grounds; but, even at that day they must have seen the futility of resisting the march of destiny. General Anthony Wayne, too, had given the combined tribes such a chastisement that they never dared think of recovering from it until the War of 1812, and that period, at the time we are speaking, was yet a great ways off.

When our new friends arrived in the flat-boat, they at once entered into and became a part of the families of the settlement. It requires considerable time for the lines which separate the different classes of society to form, and as yet none existed in Riverton. They were a band of brothers and sisters too clearly united by a common aim, and by a common danger to allow any discord to come among them.

Mr. Lawrence had been but a few days in the settlement, when he informed his wife that he believed he should select some other place in which to erect his home. This announcement created some surprise, but when he explained more fully his intention, she expressed her entire willingness to accompany him.

He said this entire region would soon fill up with emigrants. Scarcely a day passed in which some flat-boat did not drift by, carrying the settlers further into the wilderness of the great West. There were plenty of locations which were preferable to Riverton and were comparatively near at hand. Unless they were soon seized upon they would be appropriated by others, and the golden opportunity would thus slip from their grasp.

They could choose a spot to suit themselves, one where they had plenty of room to grow and expand, without encroaching upon their neighbors, and one which, when the land was cleared of the timber, would give them the choicest soil of the richest portion of the Ohio Valley.

True, they would have to forego the society of their friends, for a time at least; but before long others would come around them, and the country would soon be dotted with towns and villages. Furthermore, it was not the in-



tention of Mr. Lawrence to go to such a distance, as to cut his communication with R verton. His purpose was to select a place, from which they could make their way with little difficulty to the settlement, and where they could necessarily receive visitors from the same place.

"Have you selected any place?" inquired Mrs. Bingham, when it was decided to make the removal.

"No; not as yet. That will be a matter of small difficulty, however. In a country like this, it will not require a lengthy search to find a location which will suit us in every respect."

"How are we to make the removal? you know we have quite a quantity of goods and furniture."

"As there are flat-boats continually going down the river, I have no doubt we can secure conveyance upon one of them; or, in case we do not choose to do so, we can go use the boats which belong to the settlement. I think Colonel Ringgold's pleasure boat would take them all in two or three trips."

"But it seems to me it would be more prudent for you first to decide upon your destination before setting out."

"You are right, dear wife; Herbert and I will make a voyage this very day."

"That will suit me exactly!" exclaimed the youngster, springing from his chair, and clapping his hands with delight. "I was thinking of that, when mother spoke, but I waited for her to propose it."

It was now near the middle of the day, and Mr. Bingham decided to defer starting until after dinner. He received permission from Colonel Ringgold to use his boat, as long as he chose, provided only that he came safely back with it in the end.

"You see," said the colonel, "that was rigged up to suit my taste exactly, and I don't believe there is another like it on the Ohio, and I wouldn't fancy bidding good-by to it, just yet."

Mr. Bingham, as a matter of course, promised the best of care of his precious craft, for he knew the old gentleman valued it very highly. It differed mainly from the small



boats in common use, in those days, in the newly-settled parts of our country, in that it was constructed more like the common row boats even in our harbors and rivers. His own ingenuity had put it together from the timbers of the flat-boat, which had transported his family to their new home.

The boat was provided with a sail; and, as there was quite a breeze, rippling the surface of the river, there was every prospect that the trip would be pleasant in every way. In case the wind fell, they were abundantly able to use the oars; but, when one goes upon a voyage of pleasure and discovery, it is far more agreeable to have the unrestricted use of all his senses.

It was barely past noon when Mr. Bingham and his son stepped into the boat, and spreading the sail to the wind, sped rapidly down the river. All that needed attention was the rudder, and taking this in charge, Mr. Bingham directed his son to a seat in the bow, and the pleasures of the trip began.

As the settler wished an unobstructed view of the country, the little vessel was guided into the centre of the stream, so as to afford the widest range of observation possible. On either hand stretched the towering woods, their massy boughs waving to the gentle breeze, while their green overhanging branches seemed to invite all to a shelter in their cool shades. It was one of these occasions, when the most dignified old age feels an almost uncontrollable impulse to run, shout, and believe itself childhood again.

After leaving the settlement, not an acre of clearing was visible. The broad Ohio opened before them, like a gleaming road, cut through the vast forest, stretching away until, when it made a sweeping course to the east, it appeared as if swallowed up by the great wilderness itself. On the Kentucky shore there was a swell of land, rising almost to dimensions of a mountain, which, by its variety in the landscape added to the vastness of the view.

"Where have all these flat-boats gone, that have passed down the river?" asked Herbert.



"They have landed somewhere along these shores, either in Ohio or Kentucky."

"Do you expect to see any of their landing places?"

"No; they are too far away. If any of them proposed stopping in this section, it is likely they would have done so at Riverton, but they have wished to go on, and I have no doubt that the nearest settlement to ours is at least twenty miles distant."

"What is that yonder?" suddenly interrupted Herbert, a few minutes later, pointing some distance ahead, and toward the Kentucky shore.

"Some animal which has entered the water and is about to swim across."

"A bear?"

"No; it is a deer; don't you see its antlers?"

The head, lying horizontal on the surface, and surmounted by the prong-like horns, was now plainly discovered, gliding rapidly across the stream.

"Let us overtake it!" exclaimed the boy, "we can head it off!"

"I don't know about that," said Mr. Bingham, "but we will try."

The boat was headed toward the Ohio side of the stream, with the view of intercepting the deer; but the latter had snuffed the danger, and displayed a celerity in the water, almost equal to that upon the land; for, turning still more down stream, he shot forward like a startled fish; and a few moments later, as his feet touched bottom, his huge, leathern-covered body, rose to view, with the water dripping from it; he walked a few steps, until he stood upon the hard, dry earth, when he turned, cast one wondering look upon these who had presumed to interfere with him, and then plunged into the woods, and disappeared.

"Ah! yonder is something which looks as though we are not the only persons who are in this solitude," said Mr. Bingham, pointing to the other side of the stream.



## CHAPTER II.

THE INDIAN CAMP—THE RED MAN—SITE OF THE NEW HOME—  
THE RATTLESNAKE—BOAT STOLN.

That which arrested the attention of Mr. Bingham, and caused the exclamation, given at the close of the last chapter was a thin column of smoke, rising perpendicularly through the tree-tops until it was dissipated in the clear sunning above. It was so thin and vapory that but for its vertical position, it would have passed for an ordinary wisp of cloud, but a few moments scrutiny was sufficient to show its nature to be different.

"What does it mean?"

"It is the smoke from somebody's camp-fire."

"Are they white people?"

"You are asking a rather difficult question," smiled Mr. Bingham. "I am inclined to think, however, that the people who are gathered around that camp-fire are of a coppery color."

"I don't suppose there are many white people here except along the river, or in the settlements. How far are they away?"

"About a half mile, as near as I can judge."

"Do you think they will see us?"

"Hardly, although it would make little difference whether they do or not, as they are at peace with us."

"That may be; but somehow or other, father, I always feel a little frightened when I meet an Indian. When I was out hunting the other day, I was half startled out of my senses, when I stopped by the spring to drink, to see a great painted Miami sitting there cleaning his gun."

"How did you know whether he was a Miami, Shawanee, Wyandot, or Pottawatomie?"

"I couldn't have told by his dress or manner; but he was an Indian, that I remembered seeing in Riverton."



week ago, and I heard Colonel Ringgold say that he was a Miami."

"Well, he did you no great harm, I presume?"

"No; but I felt very good, when I was able to get away from him. I am pretty sure he saw that I was scared, and I couldn't help looking behind me until I got back to the settlement."

"They are a strange people," remarked Mr. Bingham, as much to himself as to the boy. "I believe Colonel Ringgold has uniformly treated them kindly, and to that as much as to the frowning block-house, do they owe their safety thus far."

"But, father, if I am not greatly mistaken, yonder is one of them, standing upon the shore."

Herbert was right; for at a point, nearly opposite that of the camp-fire, they saw an Indian hunter, standing in full view. He had a rifle in his hand, and seemed to be watching the little boat with great interest. Whether he had ever before seen such a contrivance as a sail, is uncertain, but he was interested in what was to him a novel mode of propulsion.

"Why are you running so close to the shore?" inquired Herbert, as he observed that their boat kept but a few yards from the Ohio bank.

"Well, we shall lose nothing by giving that camp-fire as wide a berth as possible. I don't say that we have anything to fear, but there is no telling what strange ideas may enter the head of that savage standing yonder."

Herbert had no doubt of the prudence of his father, although he did not express any fears. The Indian surveyed them until they had floated quite a distance below him, when he turned away in the direction of the camp-fire.

"He may watch for us to come back," remarked Herbert, when they had regained the middle of the current, and were sailing as usual.

"How can he know we intend to return?" asked the father.

"If he is not a stranger in these parts, he must have remarked that it belongs to Colonel Ringgold, and he could



see that we had no load with us, so that we cannot be going very far."

"You talk like an o'd hunter," laughed Mr. Bingham, "one would be sure that you had spent several years, instead of weeks, in the west."

"I 'spose I've learned a good deal from hearing the hunters talk when they're together."

Our friends were now two or three miles from Riverton and both were closely scanning the shores for some place which might invite them to land. As yet, the monotony of the woods remained unbroken, but suddenly Herbert called out with an expression of delight:

"Yonder is the very place!"

"Where?"

He answered by pointing to a spot on the Ohio shore, where was a small clearing covered with rank grass, and through the center of which ran quite a large stream, debouching into the river with considerable force.

The boat was instantly turned in that direction, and a few moments later, father and son stepped upon the bank. The sail was lowered, and the vessel pulled high and dry, where there was no danger of its being washed away by the current.

"Do you know why I like this place?" asked Herbert, as they walked up the bank.

"I presume because it differs from the rest of the country through which we have been passing."

"No; that stream of water is just the thing. We will put up a saw mill and saw boards and planks for the settlers along the river."

Mr. Bingham started. He felt that his son had uttered a sentence which would decide an era in the lives of himself and family. Build a saw mill! the very idea. How singular that it did not occur to him, when he first noticed the stream pouring into the river! How much more singular that none of the settlers had come prepared for such a business for which there was so much urgent call.

In the same moment, in which Herbert uttered the sentence regarding the new project, his father resolved that it



should be carried out. He did not take time to consider the details, but he comprehended that it was possible, and that there was no earthly reason to deter him.

A more critical examination of the stream was now made. It could not have been better adapted to its purpose. It was quite broad and rapid, with a considerable fall. A comparatively slight dam would answer, as its volume made it unnecessary that there should be much back water. The bed of the stream lay several feet below the enclosing banks; and, in short, it was the very place which an experienced miller would have selected as the location of his mill.

On the western side of the stream (where one glance was sufficient to satisfy Mr. Bingham his future house should be erected), was the broad clearing alluded to. Surrounding this was an extent of "open wood"—that is, the trees were sparsely spread over the area; and below it was entirely devoid of undergrowth. It was as if some fierce fire had raged here years before, destroying the shrubbery and vegetation which grew near the earth, while the large timber was left clear and clean, as if dressed for the woodman's axe.

When the settlers had wandered for several hours through the woods and up the stream, they finally seated themselves upon a fallen tree.

"I don't believe there is a spot on the whole of Ohio, which can suit us better," remarked Mr. Bingham. "Nature intended this stream to run a saw mill."

"Do you mean to put up one, father?"

"The idea never occurred to me, until you spoke of it. I have thought considerably about it in the last hour or two, and I will say that the scheme strikes me as a good one."

"But where can you get the saw?"

"For that I shall have to go to Pittsburgh. There are some other indispensable articles, which I shall also be obliged to procure from that place. Why didn't you think of the saw mill, before we started?" asked the father with a smile.



"But how are you going to Pittsburgh?"

"I shall borrow the colonel's boat and take a sail up the river; that will be much easier than walking."

"Yes; and you can bring me a good lot of books; for I've read everything through that we have."

"Have you read the Bible through?"

"Yes, sir; I am now going through it for the third time. I have not missed a day since little sister Florence died two days ago."

"How long do you intend to keep up this practice of reading the Bible?"

"As long as I live," was the prompt reply of Herbert, uttered with a glowing eye.

"But won't it get to be an old story after you have gone through it several more times?"

"Herbert looked up in surprise at his father, who smiled and added:

"My dear son, nothing has pleased me more than this daily habit which you have formed of reading the Bible. Keep it up till your dying day; let nothing prevent you; if you go abroad, carry the little Bible of Florence with you. Let it be a rule and a guide to your actions, and there is no fear of its ever becoming distasteful to you, or of its influence over your conduct becoming weaker than it now is."

"But, father, I want books to study, and books to read—I hope you will bring me a great pile of them."

"Depend upon it, son. I shall not forget you when I make the trip up the river. But I see the sun is down behind the tree-tops, and it is time we began to return."

Father and son rose from the tree upon which they had been sitting, when the quick eye of the latter detected a movement beneath the trunk, and the next instant an arrowy head darted straight out with lightning-like quickness, just touching the knee of Mr. Bingham, accompanied at the same time, by a short sharp rattle.

"O father! a rattlesnake! he has bitten you!" called out Herbert, darting backward, and looking hurriedly around for some missile with which to slay the reptile.



"No; he hasn't, but he came uncomfortably near it. Keep back, for he is a big fellow, and is terribly angry."

The fangs of the reptile entered the trousers-leg of Mr. Bingham, but did not touch the skin. The serpent did what his species seldom do; he made a slight miscalculation, just sufficient to allow his victim to escape—a favor which the latter did not seem disposed to reciprocate.

The rattlesnake lay coiled beneath the log upon which our two friends were sitting and at the same time, during their conversation, could have buried his fangs in either of their ankles; but not until they rose together and produced a jar in the trunk which covered it, did it make the attempt.

Apparently satisfied, after striking, it drew back its head, and only the gleam and glitter of a slight portion of its coil could be discerned—enough, however, to show that it was an uncommonly large one.

"He is an ugly customer," said Mr. Bingham, after he had retreated several yards, and satisfied himself that he had suffered no harm, and we must kill him."

"How are we going to get a chance at him, as long as he stays under the log?"

"We'll roll it over and then shoot him."

"Won't that be too dangerous?"

"We can manage that; you hold my gun, and keep at a safe distance until I bring him out."

"Shall I shoot him?"

"Do you think you can do it? You must shatter his head; we don't want to torture him by mangling his body."

"Just give me the chance, I will show you what I can do."

Mr. Bingham now walked carefully to the branches of the fallen tree. Grasping two of these, separated by several feet, he dallied with them a moment, and then, by a sudden wrench turned the trunk half over, leaving exposed the glittering coil of an immense rattlesnake.

Startled by this uncovering of his retreat, the reptile raised its head, and waved it hither and yon, as if looking



for something at which to strike. The next instant the rifle of Herbert Bingham was discharged, and the bullet striking the small head of the monster, smashed it out of all shape or semblance. The *Crotalus* species is killed with extraordinary ease, and after a few furious struggles, it subsided into death.

"There is one dispute of our claim settled," laughed Mr. Bingham, "you made a good shot Herbert; but it is almost dark, and we should have started long ago."

They hurried down to the river-bank to embark for home, but to their surprise and alarm, upon reaching the stream, the boat was gone!

### CHAPTER III.

SEARCH FOR THE BOAT—ITS RECOVERY—A SINGULAR OCCURRENCE—THE FLAT-BOAT—DANGER—THE INDIAN CAMP FIRE AGAIN.

"What can be the meaning of this?" asked Mr. Bingham, looking furtively around him, when he found that the boat was really gone.

"It must have floated away."

"Impossible; for I pulled it about clear from the water."

"Hasn't the river risen while we were gone?"

"The rain which we had a few days ago may have caused it to rise, but it could not have been more than a few inches—not enough to disturb the boat. I don't know what Colonel Ringgold will think of us, if we allow it to be lost in that manner. But we cannot afford to lose it," added Mr. Bingham, speaking more earnestly. "Let's make a search."

"Which way shall we go?"

"You go up the river and I will go down; the moment one of us catches sight of it, he must whistle to the other."



As time was passing, the two instantly separated, and began tramping through the undergrowth, along shore, for the boat which had so mysteriously disappeared. When Herbert reached the mouth of the stream, already referred to, he was puzzled awhile as to the manner in which he should cross it. However, after considerable search, he found a place where he could spring from one stone to another, and finally land upon the opposite side, where he diligently prosecuted his hunt.

Mr. Bingham, as he passed down the river-bank was somewhat uneasy at what had occurred. Taken in connection with the camp-fire and the Indian, who had watched them so attentively as they descended the river, it made him apprehensive of danger, and did a great deal to dim the coloring of the picture he had formed in his mind, while rambling through the wood.

He passed several hundred yards down stream, carefully examining the shores, and at every suitable opportunity, he looked out upon the river, as far as the gathering darkness would permit; but as yet he had discovered nothing which could afford a clue to the missing vessel.

Finally he paused, and was debating the prudence of proceeding further, when he was startled by hearing the signal agreed upon. A short, tremulous whistle, uttered quickly, as if the boy were alarmed at something, arrested the father's footsteps as suddenly as if the threatened danger had risen in the path before him.

Scarcely pausing a moment, he turned on his heel and began retracing his footsteps, as rapidly as the nature of the ground would permit. The signal, repeated at every few seconds intermission, did not allay his alarm; and, not until he had twice responded to it, did it cease.

Herbert carried no gun, while his father did. This fact made the latter the more uneasy: and, when he reached the brawling torrent, he did not pause long enough to find a means of crossing it dry shod, but sprang in, and waded rapidly across.

He was hurrying along in this manner, when he abruptly came upon the boat. It was lying under the bank, drawn



up in precisely the manner in which it had been left. Indeed the similarity was so great, that Mr. Bingham looked around and examined the contour of the shore to make sure this was not the precise spot in which he had left it; but the location of the creek settled this matter beyond dispute.

Although greatly perplexed to understand the meaning of this, he was now more concerned for his child. He saw nothing of him; but while endeavoring to pierce the gloom, the boy himself came silently from the wood and stood beside him.

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed the father. "I was fearful something had happened to you. Have you learned who ran away with the boat?"

"I saw the man, that I think did it."

"Where, and who is he?"

"I was looking along shore for the boat, when I heard a noise as if it were grating on the sand, and the next minute I caught sight of it, and saw a man pulling it up on the bank. I asked him what business he had with it, but he made no answer, but turned round and looked at me a moment, and then walked away, without speaking a word."

"Was he a white man or an Indian?"

"He was a white man dressed like a hunter."

"Haven't you seen anything of him since?"

"Nothing at all; I was afraid he might come back again and make trouble, so I called to you pretty often."

"The whole thing looks as strange as ever; but, we have already lost a great deal of time."

The boat was shoved into the water, the two sprang in, lifted the sail, and Mr. Bingham took his position at the rudder as before. There was still quite a breeze, and they were wafted pleasantly and swiftly homeward. As before, they took the centre of the river, keeping as nearly as possible, equally distant from each shore.

They had progressed but a short distance, when the full moon rose above the tree-tops, and shed such a light upon the river, that they sailed with as much certainty as at



noon-day. The scene was grand and impressive, but our friends would have much preferred that absolute darkness should have enclosed them. There was an unpleasant sense of their conspicuous position, when they would have chosen to reach home unobserved.

The history of the aborigines of this country, show that as a rule, they cannot be trusted. Abused, swindled and outraged as they have been, and, as they still are, and always will be, so long as an honest Indian trader or agent is unknown, yet the nature of the North American Indian is melancholy, sullen, revengeful and treacherous. The celebrated treaty of Greenville, brought about by the consummate generalship of Anthony Wayne, held the Delawares, Potawatomies, Shawanees, and Miamies in an iron grasp until the whirlwind of war, swept over in the west in 1812; but it was a forced peace, into which many and many a dusky-hued son of the forest entered unwillingly.

When Herbert Bingham expressed his fear of meeting an Indian alone, he only gave utterance to the general feeling which obtained among the more mature settlers. There was a deep-seated distrust of them, which was shown by the care which Colonel Ringgold took to keep the block-house in good repair, and the pains to which he went to maintain a reserve of provisions and ammunition within it.

This will make plain the cause of Mr. Bingham's wish to reach home quietly and unobserved, and will show why he steered as far away as possible from the Indian camp-fire. So now they unconsciously lowered their voices, when they spoke to each other, and glanced from shore to shore, and up and down the stream as if fearful of some approaching danger.

All at once, they saw through the partial gloom, a huge dark body floating around a bend in the river, directly toward them. There was no light or appearance of life upon it, and it caused considerable surprise upon the part of our two friends.

"What do you imagine it to be?" asked Mr. Bingham.



"There has been quite a freshet you know, and this may be some settler's house floating down the river."

"No; I think it is a flat-boat."

"Oh! yes, certainly it is; I can see its shape, now since you have spoken of it."

"Hark! don't you hear the creak of the long, swinging oar, and you can see the water flash, as they work the clumsy craft."

All know with what distinctness a slight sound can be heard on a still summer night, and there is scarcely a school boy who is not familiar with the statement that the cry of "All's Well!" can be heard from New to Old Gibraltar, the stations being something less than a dozen miles apart.

Although the flat-boat, and sailing vessel were separated a good half mile, yet our friends plainly heard the slightest sound upon it. The creaking of the great swinging oar, the footstep of the man who controlled it, and even his "puff" as he paused, as though tired from his exertions; these could not have been more audible, if uttered within a dozen feet of them.

The sailing boat was now shooting through the water at a rapid rate, and the two crafts were swiftly nearing each other. The sail was lowered, when within a few hundred yards of meeting.

"There may be some friends on board who will be glad to see us. I will hail them."

But, before Mr. Bingham could do so, several heads appeared at the gunwale of the flat-boat, and called out to them.

"Who are you?"

"Mr. Bingham and son, returning to the settlement alone."

"Do you use those kind of boats in these parts?"

"We do, although I believe they are not generally in use," replied Mr. Bingham, as he ran his boat alongside and allowed it to drift a short distance with the large one.

"May I ask where you are from yourself?"



"A few miles from Pittsburgh. We are bound down the river, about a dozen miles from here I suppose."

Our friends inquired several of their names, but they heard none which they recognized, nor did they bring any news, of especial interest or note. In reply to an inquiry, they said there had been one or two hostile shots fired at them on their way down; but no danger was done, and they saw nothing of enemies.

There being nothing to gain by further companionship, Mr. Bingham again raised his sail, and his little craft sped rapidly on its way. Less than a dozen yards was still intervening between them, when the same person with whom they had been holding their conversation called out to them.

"You will find a camp-fire of Indians round the bend. Be careful of them."

"Did they molest you?"

"No; but I think they would have done so, if they hadn't seen we were prepared. I don't think they will be afraid to trouble you."

And again exchanging farewells, the two crafts separated, never again to meet. The admonition of the flat-boat served to render Mr. Bingham apprehensive. He held no well-defined fear, except a general distrust of the Indians of whom, as yet, he had not received the first evidence of hostile intent toward himself.

It was not long before they passed the bend, where they had first caught sight of the flat-boat, when they discovered the camp-fire to which the emigrants had alluded. As correctly as they could judge, it was directly opposite the point where they had seen the column of smoke filtering through the tree-top.

The fire stood upon the very edge of the river, and its broad rays were thrown far out upon the stream, even to the opposite side, which fact, taken in connection with the unusually bright moonlight, made concealment upon the river almost out of the question.

"We may as well keep in the centre of the stream,"



said Mr. Bingham, "for I don't see how they can possibly miss observing us."

"Wouldn't it be best to run close to the Ohio side?"

"But the light from the camp-fire reaches clear across."

"It is very faint there."

"The moonlight is very strong, and won't it be worse for us to attempt concealment and fail, than to sail boldly forward, as though we had no fear?" asked Mr. Bingham of his son, really feeling in a dilemma, as to the best course for him to take.

"But don't you see the moon has not risen high enough to show upon the shore?"

"Yes; but I do not know as that will help us any."

With this, Mr. Bingham ran the boat to the opposite side of the river, keeping as close to the shore as possible. The bright moon being less than one half the distance above the horizon, the shadow of the overhanging trees was thrown several rods out upon the river. Into this line of shadow the little boat glided and sped noiselessly upon its way.

The hearts of our friends throbbed faster than usual, as they came opposite the camp-fire, and they did not dare to trust themselves to speak, so fearful were they of attracting attention. The sail would have been lowered before reaching this point, but for the apprehension Mr. Bingham felt that the slight noise would attract the attention of those whom they were so anxious to avoid.

Thus far, although they had continually glanced toward the camp-fire, they had seen nothing of the Indians; but, when they entered the shade, they discovered several figures pass between them and the light. Their shadows, grotesquely lengthened, were thrown far out upon the stream, and they themselves had the appearance of giants as they floated to and fro.

All at once, Mr. Bingham reached up and caught the branch of a tree in his hand, and held the boat fast.

"Sh! I think they have discovered us!" he whispered.



## CHAPTER IV.

HOME AGAIN—THE JOURNEY TO PITTSBURGH—RETURN—  
STUDIES—THE NEW SAW MILL—REMOVAL TO THE NEW  
HOME.

Father and son held their breath in suspense. Two of the Indians seemed to be looking toward them, and one of them raised his gun, as if he intended to shoot. It was a fearful moment; they expected each moment to hear the report, and perhaps the bullet would prove fatal to one or the other. Both lifted their hearts to God and prayed him that he would stay the arm or turn aside the missile. Feeling that no good could be accomplished by remaining stationary, Mr. Bingham loosened his hold and the boat glided forward again.

The red man did not fire, and the probability is that he did not intend to do so; but our friends drew a great sigh of relief when they had passed beyond the camp-fire, greater than that experienced a half hour later, when they touched the shore at Riverton, drew the boat up to the bank and wended their way home.

It being finally decided after long consultation with wife and friends, that the mill should be erected, the next step was to get the necessary material. The most important of these could only be obtained at Pittsburgh. The best, and, in fact, almost the only, means of making a journey thither, was with Colonel Ringgold's boat. Herbert was anxious to accompany his father, he being fearful that his supply of books would be forgotten; but his parents thought differently and he was left behind. It was a beautiful morning, when Mr. Bingham bade his family and friends good-bye, and hoisting his sail, sped up the Ohio toward its source, or more properly where it first assumes its name. The journey was accomplished in less than a week, without any incident worthy of note and the miller at once set about procuring the much-needed materials.



Two saws of the best metal, beside a couple of hand-saws, some fifty yards of belting, and a large quantity of iron, such as he knew would be needed in the construction and repair of the mill, were purchased. This absorbed considerable of the miller's funds, but he had reserved plenty with which to redeem his promise to his boy and he did not forget him. Arithmetics, philosophies, books of travel and adventure, geographies and miscellaneous books, which in those days, cost far more than they do now, and then the settler looked about him for some means of transporting his freight down the river. The boat of Colonel Ringgold was unequal to the task of carrying them, and he, therefore, looked for a flat-boat descending the river, as he knew scarcely a day passed without one starting either from Pittsburgh or some point above.

This, however, necessitated a delay of several days, but he secured one at last, and finding its owners very willing to carry whatever he wished, he made still further purchases for his embryo saw mill and had them placed on board. The books he carried in his own boat, and embarked on his downward voyage at the same time that the bulky flat-boat drifted slowly down the young Ohio.

Impelled by wind, he journeyed much more rapidly than his friends, and touched at Riverton in due time, with what, to Herbert, was the most valuable cargo that was ever transported to the West. The boy, as perhaps we should have stated long ago, was very studious, and this disposition had been carefully encouraged and directed by his mother, who, well educated herself, set apart a portion of every day for the instruction of her son.

The greatest blessing which a child can have is a good mother, the greatest calamity which can befall him is her loss. Herbert Bingham had been highly favored in this respect. Almost the first sentences he learned to lisp, were those which made up his childhood's prayer at his mother's knee and when his mind grew and became filled with the curiosity natural to those of his age, he rarely failed of having it gratified when he went to his beloved mother. Her purest pleasure was in the instruction of the little boy and



girl; but, when the latter was laid in her tiny grave, beneath the old oak in her native village, then her boy seemed drawn to her by a still stronger chord of affection than before.

Few mothers knew how to restrain and temper their affection for their children. Mercy so often usurps the place of justice, that the child is spoiled. It is a severe task for an affectionate parent to witness the pain of her own child, even though there be a certainty that it is necessary for its vigorous moral growth. A boy loves the heart only the more warmly, and respects the hand the more true, which prompts and administers the punishment for wrong doing, and that teacher who is not merely kind, but who is eminently just to all, is the one whose memory shall be fragrant through all time to those who have sat under his instruction.

Herbert devoured with avidity over and over all the books within his reach, and made a circuit of Riverton, upon his arrival, for quest of more mental food. He was only partially satisfied. Few of the settlers had anything more than a Bible and an old almanac or two, and these were accessible in his own family. Here and there, he found a treasure, but the owner had fully an exalted opinion of it, as he had himself, and it therefore availed him little.

But when the little boat of Colonel Ringgold touched at the wharf and he saw the pile of books, he could not restrain his joy. Fumbling his hands through them, and glancing at a few, to make sure he was not dreaming, he whirled around, and dashed away to his mother, that she might share in his delight.

"O mother! mother! father has brought me ~~ten~~ thousand books!"

"How many?" she asked with her quite smile.

"Why I think there must be—over twenty."

"Ah! that is quite a difference; of course he would not forget you"—

But the excited youngster had dashed down to the boat again to make sure that not one of his prizes were in ~~con~~



ger. They were soon taken out, and with his arms, endeavoring to grasp more than usual, started on a run homeward. The natural consequences followed. The pile of books reaching so high, that his view of what was directly in front was shut off; he did not see the large stone which lay in his path, nor was he aware of its existence, until he was precipitated over it, and his books were scattered in every direction.

By this time, he had gained an idea of his undue haste, and he became more deliberate in his movements. After a time, the books were all safely transported to the house where they were staying, and he instantly became so absorbed in them, as to be oblivious to the saw-mill, new home, or anything at all in the outside world. Father and mother looked at each other, smiled quietly and concluded to let him alone for the present.

The settlers of Rverton took fully as much concern in the new saw-mill as did the proprietor, for they had a prospective interest in it; and they volunteered all the assistance he could need, and he gladly accepted their proffer. It would have been a task, amounting almost to an impossibility, for a single man, alone and unaided, to erect a saw-mill. Equally Herculean tasks may have been performed in the world's history, but Mr. Bingham hardly felt that he was the man to perform them.

A few days later, the flat-boat was seen, and Colonel Ringgold himself and half dozen of the settlers rode out to intercept it. Finding everything right they sailed on down stream, until they reached the side of the new mill, when they took down their sail and waited for their more tardy friends.

The flat-boat discharged her load, while floating down current, and in their trips the little sail boat deposited it upon shore. The men were liberally paid for bringing it from Pittsburgh, pleasant wishes interchanged, and the work was immediately begun.

It would be uninteresting to give all the details of the erection of the saw-mill. Necessity is the mother of invention, and the settlers had all acquired a dexterity in the con-



struction of buildings, which did them good service. Understanding the immense work which would be required of the mill, Mr. Bingham prudently resolved to make it so firmly and securely as to compel it to do of old age when a proper time should come for a cessation of its usefulness.

The foundation was laid "broad and sure;" the timbers were massive and firm, and, as it gradually approached completion, its ponderous parts would have attracted the notice of any passer-by. The architecture was rude, but it answered its ends as well as if it came from the hands of the most famous architects of the time.

The banks were then made, and made too, with the knowledge that in all probability they would be often called upon to bear a prodigious pressure. Lastly the powerful gates were put together, closed, and the back-water began rapidly to collect until it covered an area of fully an acre, the centre of which was very deep. When it reached this point, it began flowing off at an opening which had been left for its escape, provided on purpose to meet the extraordinary pressure of a freshet, when the mill-gates and the mill itself would be endangered.

All being ready, and a log adjusted, Mr. Bingham turned the water upon the overshot wheel. Never did he forget the thrill which passed through him, as, after a moment's pause, he heard it begin revolving, and then observed the saw slowly rise and fall, and immediately dart up and down with an eager rapidity, as if anxious to try its teeth upon something. Then as it nipped the end of the huge log, what a smooth line it instantly bit across it! and then how it plunged straight into the massive trunk, and raged and crunched, and hurled the dust up and down, as if it really enjoyed the sport!

All this time, Mr. Bingham, Colonel Ringgold and their friends, stood looking upon the action of the saw with the most unbounded admiration and delight. The perfect accuracy with which it worked was but the natural reward of the care taken in and the labor bestowed upon it, and the conqueror never received his laurels with more pleasure than did they all, this evidence of absolute success.



They now turned their attention to the interior working of the mill. The large wheel turned slowly and regularly, and the connecting band worked to a nicety; the flow of water was found more than sufficient to run it perpetually. Indeed the surplus was now running off at the waste gate.

"Is there any improvement you can suggest?" asked Colonel Ringgol, as they finally came back to where the saw was cutting its way so nicely through the log.

"None at all, unless it be in the reserve motion," replied Mr. Bingham, "we will speedily test that."

The saw, having reached the extremity of the log, the water was slackened, the "reverse," applied, and it danced backward, as does an athlete, when dallying with his adversary, preparatory to dealing the deciding blow.

"It works to a charm," said Mr. Bingham, unable to repress his delight. "I am now ready to take contracts for building villages and towns."

"Your first work, I suppose, will be in putting up yourself a house and what buildings you need; after that I think we can keep you running awhile."

"Yes; my next duty is to erect a house for my family. I will leave them in Riverton until it is finished."

"Of course; but it is now well toward night, so we may as well go home together."

"Wait a half hour longer, until I have sawed this log into planks, and I will be ready."

This was done, and just as the sun was setting, the little party embarked and made their way home to Riverton.

On the morrow Mr. Bingham brought his son and two men (who had volunteered their assistance) back with him. The latter set to work felling trees, while the first devoted his whole time to sawing them up into heavy planking. The mill was a source of wonder and delight to Herbert, and it required but a short time for him to learn the manner in which it should be run. This enabled his father to assist the men at their work, without suffering the mill to be idle.

Steadily the habitation assumed the proportions of a



house ; the natural clearing was razed with the sickle, until it was shaved down to the very ground ; the ponderous framework was adjusted, and the massive planks secured, until at last, a goodly sized house stood upon the banks of the river. It was a building remarkable from the fact that it was not made of logs, as were all others in this section. Its fragrant planks gleamed through the green woods, and no doubt attracted more than one wondering gaze from the animals wandering through the woods.

It commanded an extensive view both up and down the river, and was a source of unfailing wonderment to the emigrants who floated by. There could be little wonderment regarding it, as the explanation of its presence in these parts was at its side, in the shape of the savage saw-mill, crunching the huge logs in its maw, with such a clamor and with such merciless accuracy.

All being ready, Mr. Bingham moved his family and his worldly possessions into his new house.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE HUNT—SHOOTING OF A DEER—THE CAMP-FIRE—A NARROW ESCAPE—WOLVES.

Herbert Bingham was delighted with his new house. The broad, beautiful Ohio, that flowed so calmly by, and which glanced so brightly at moonlight, the noisy plash of the brook as it tumbled into the river, the vast woods stretching away until in the far distance, they became misty, and mingled with the horizon ; the towering trunks nearer at hand, and the cool twilight of the forest itself ; all these had a charm for the boy, as they still have for many an older head, and when not studying, or reading, or when not needed to assist his father, he frequently spent hours in rambling aimlessly among the trees, or fishing in the spring-like streams.

For several days, Herbert was kept so steadily employed,



assisting his father, that he had little leisure time on his hands; and, when it did come, he devoted himself assiduously to his studies, under the impression that he had a great deal of lost time to make up, that he began to grow pale, lost his appetite, and was threatened with a turn of sickness. On seeing this, his parents consulted together, and concluded, as the best medicine which could be given him, that he should be sent on a day's ramble into the woods.

One evening, as they sat around the fire, Herbert was perplexed over and completely occupied in a problem, at which he had been studying for the last three days. The parents, for a few moments, looked at the pale face, and puzzled expression, and the father was about to speak, when the boy's eyes suddenly brightened, and he sprang to his feet, his whole face aglow with pleasure.

*"I've got it! I've got it!"*

And he danced about the floor, as if he were fairly wild. He was not restrained in these noisy demonstrations, until he had vented his excitement, when he again sat down and picked up his arithmetic.

"Shut that book," said the father, kindly but firmly.

The son looked at him in surprise.

"You have done enough for to-day; in fact you have done enough for this week."

"There's another problem that I should like to finish to-night."

"It won't do," said Mr. Bingham, shaking his head. "It is just as easy for a boy to study too much as not enough. It is true that boys ain't very apt to do it, but I would much prefer to see a boy neglect his studies than apply himself too closely. You are getting pale and weak, and must leave your books for a few days."

"What do you wish me to do?"

"I have no work at which I particularly need assistance, but to-morrow I wish you to go on a hunt—to spend the entire day at it."

The boy looked as if he were in doubt whether to be pleased or not.



"I should like it very much, but I have been calculating how many problems I could find before Saturday night, and if I lose to-morrow, it will upset all my calculations."

"I am glad to hear it. Put your books away, and spend the rest of the evening in running bullets, and getting the gun in order."

Herbert did as he had been directed, and run over fifty bullets, heaping them in a tiny mound, where they looked like as many balls of gleaming silver. The powder-flask was filled, the vent hole carefully cleaned out, and the barrel swathed and the flint picked, so that there might be no unnecessary delay in the morning.

These proceedings occupied the greater part of the evening, and when completed, the evening devotions were attended to, after which all retired to rest.

The boy's sleep was broken by dreams, and frequently he awoke with a burning forehead, and a dull, uncomfortable feeling, which he knew too well had been caused by excessive application to his studies. He understood the object of his parents in giving him a holiday for hunting, and was fully sensible of the need he had for some strong exciting physical exercise, for he remembered how sweet and dreamless his sleep had been, before he had become so intensely absorbed in his arithmetic; and he did not doubt that if left to himself, he would have gone on until his health was completely gone. Few indeed are the youngsters who appreciate the wisdom of their parents.

The next morning dawned bright and beautiful, and Herbert was quite elated at the prospect of his hunt. He however felt quite languid, and had little appetite.

"I don't think I shall need much dinner," he said to his mother, as she was preparing his lunch.

"Perhaps I will come home at dinner time."

"You musn't do any such a thing. Your father left instructions for you not to make your appearance before dusk; and he says he will be better pleased, if you take a notion to camp out and come back to-morrow afternoon."

"If he is so anxious for me to do so, perhaps I shall."



And bidding his mother good-bye, he slung his rifle over his shoulder, and walking rapidly across the clearing, plunged into the woods.

The boy had walked but a short time, when he began to experience the natural effect of the bracing air, and his brisk exercise. His spirits rose, and he soon found himself singing snatches of songs, whistling, and occasionally his overflow of spirits vented itself in a loud shout, while he paused and listened to the echoes ringing among the forest arches.

Squirrels bounded from limb to limb, and both black and gray whisked before him, darting up saplings, or chirping from the topmost branches, as if defying his prowess and skill; and occasionally he caught sight of some rabbit in some small cluster of bushes, his head and ears erect, with his round shining eyes fixed upon him, and his jaws rapidly munching his cud; then as he came nearer, he skurried away, rattling and tearing through the dried leaves, as if he had been propelled from the mouth of a cannon; but such game was in no danger from our hero, and he never once drew sight upon them. He was in search of nobler game.

When the sun was near the meridian, Herbert became sensible of a ravening hunger, and sat down beneath a large beech to eat his dinner. His mother had prepared a goodly quantity of food, but he ate every morsel, and "wished for more."

"If my appetite increases at this rate, I shall have to have help to satisfy it," muttered the boy, as after a good long rest he again shouldered his rifle and started off in the woods. He had left the river hours before and was wandering aimlessly forward some hours later, in that manner peculiar to boyhood, when the rippling of water caught his ear, and he soon came upon a brook which dashed and foamed down a steep declivity, and then hurried noiselessly down into a narrow valley. He took a long refreshing draught from its cold waters, and then arose and took a survey of the pleasant ocean.

Around him were sugar maple, hickory, beech, poplar



buckeye, pawpaw ash, sycamore, hornbeam, and numerous other trees, while clusters of the richest grapes drooped from the branches, where bushels of them must perish without one bruising the blue from their pulpy richness.

Casting his eye down the valley, he was somewhat startled and considerably pleased at deerying a noble looking buck drinking from the brook. The noise of the rippling waters had prevented the animal from hearing the approach of his enemy, or he would have been off like an arrow.

The young hunter could not have had a better opportunity, and carefully sighting his gun, so as to strike just behind the fore-leg, where the heart could be reached, he pulled the trigger. The mortally wounded animal made a frenzied leap directly upward, whirled around, ran a few paces, and then striking squarely against a tree, dropped down quivering, and by the time the boy reached him he was dead.

Herbert was naturally elated with his success, especially as he found the animal in prime condition. Feeling very hungry, he concluded that the best means of procuring supper was at hand, and he immediately began dressing it.

"I'll camp in the woods to-night," he reflected, as he busied himself in cutting it up. "Here is water, and the place is sheltered from any wind that may come up in the night, while I can build my fire against this fallen tree, and make a comfortable night of it, and I think by the time I go home, father and mother will be willing to let me have another pull at my arithmetic."

Probably the youngster would not have thought of doing this, but for the hint he had received from his mother before starting, but he was fully resolved that they should not see him for twenty-four hours, and should the weather remain pleasant he had serious thoughts of spending several days in the woods.

Herbert had learned enough of hunting to understand how a deer should be cut up, and it did not take him long to extract the choicest portions from the game. When this was done, the next proceeding was to build a fire. There



was any quantity of fuel, but he had left his flint and tinder at home. He managed, however, to set fire to some of the crisp leaves by flashing the powder in the pan of his rifle, and these he quietly blew into a blaze, and in a few moments had a roaring mass of decayed wood twigs and branches. Two large green stakes were made to unite above the blaze, and to them he fastened a golly-size piece of meat, which with careful nursing was done to a nice juicy brown.

Around him were any number of hickory and chestnuts. The ground was strewn with the former, while the large burrs were gaping open, there having been several nipping frosts; and as the velvety linings curled outwards, the trio of pump brown chestnuts could be seen within, pendent from every part of the tree. The slightest jar and they came rattling down like a storm of hailstones, strewn the ground with shining brown.

Herbert gathered a quart or two of these which were cooked upon the blazing coals, they crackling and bursting with the rapidly swelling richness within. The venison was tender, juicy and nourishing, after which the nuts came in by way of dessert, so it looked as if our young friend was doing as well as could be expected upon this his first day's hunt.

Herbert had not failed to provide himself with a blanket, which, although rather inconvenient to carry at times he knew would be needed when he came to lie down at night. Then too fearful that he might not be able to sleep until morning, he provided himself with fuel to keep his fire going through the night; for the wakeful hunter finds such an accompaniment an agreeable way of wiling away the lonely hours of darkness.

When he had completed all his arrangements, twilight had already come; and, as the gloom settled around him, he could not avoid the wish, that after all, he had made his way home, and was lying beneath the roof, where the sighing of the night-wind would lull him to sleep; and he believed, too, that his parents were longing for him, as they gathered around the evening meal, but he understood the



reason that they had advised him to take a night in the woods, in order to give him a good rest from his books, enforced rest which he would not feel, if his mind were diverted in this manner. Still further he regarded it as a sort of appeal to his manhood, which his natural pride would not allow him to decline. There was little if any personal danger incurred, as there was nothing to fear from Indians, and, as to wild animals he had plenty of powder and ball, and what more could he ask.

He sat for a long time gazing dreamily into the fire, conjuring up all sorts of images and pictures among the embers, running over some of the problems which had so perplexed him, and which he had succeeded in mastering, and longing for the arithmetic, that he might attack and overcome new difficulties. Finally, as the night progressed, he committed himself to the great Being, who alone could see him, and wrapping his blanket around him, "lay down to pleasant dreams." Lulled by the murmur of the brook, his tired frame soon sank into a sweet refreshing slumber.

Herbert slept soundly until far into the night when he was awakened in rather a startling manner. A furious growl close by his face instantly drove away all drowsiness, and opening his eyes, he saw by the dim light of the smouldering camp-fire, two large animals snarling over the remains of his deer. With a shiver of terror, he sprang up, threw wood upon the fire, and caught his gun.

As the flame flared up, the two wolves retreated into the darkness, while the boy with a thankful heart that he had not been torn to pieces while asleep, placed himself on watch, with the resolve not to fall asleep again, while these ravening brutes were around him.

Nothing of the deer remained but a few glistening bones, and the wolves seemed desirous of serving the young hunter in the same manner. As the shortest method of disposing of them, Herbert carefully sighted his gun, by the light of the fire, and sent a bullet between the eyes of the largest wolf, which doubled him up like a jack-knife, with a short yelp. He had scarcely fallen, when his comrade sprang



upon and began rending and eating him. He was given little time to enjoy his unnatural feast, when a second bullet stretched him lifeless by the side of the other carcass.

Herbert now heaped wood upon the fire; and, as the flames roared and crackled, and he carefully reloaded his piece, he experienced a sense of security, very comforting under the circumstances. He saw that he had enough fuel to keep a fire until daylight, and as long as this was done, he had nothing to fear from any of the wild animals that roamed the woods.

Scarce half an hour had elapsed, when he detected shadowy forms prowling along the edge of the brook, as if seeking to come upon him unawares. He gave them a shot or two, but took special pains to see that his fire did not smoulder, as he was well aware that this was his safeguard.

In the course of the next hour, he counted over twenty of these lauk animals, which always seems cadaverous and hungry; but they caused him little uneasiness, as none of their species have been known to raise enough courage to walk through fire.

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## CHAPTER VI.

**THE RUINS—THE BEAR—A CRUEL PROCEEDING—FIGHT BETWEEN THE BEAR AND PANTHER—THE YOUNG PIONEER AND PANTHER—LOST IN THE WOODS—A FRIEND IN NEED—HOME AGAIN.**

When the first faint gray of morning began stealing through the woods, the prowling wolves shrank away, and Herbert Bingham saw that he was alone, with no eye upon him except the one which never slumbered or slept. First returning devout thanks to heaven, for preserving him through the night in such a remarkable manner, he took a morning bath in the cool, clear brook, and then slung his rifle over his shoulder, and started in quest of something for breakfast.



As the readiest means at hand, he shot several of the plumpest looking squirrels, which he carried back to camp, and speedily dressed and cooked. With his sharp appetite, they made him a nourishing breakfast. By the time he was ready to resume his hunt, the sun was up, and another beautiful day was upon him.

Herbert found that his blanket had effectually protected him from the evening dews and damp, and he experienced no ill-effects from his first night out of doors, although he experienced an occasional drowsiness from his deprivation of sleep.

"I think I shall spend the next night at home," was the reflection of the boy, as he tramped through the forest, on the lookout for something worthy of his rifle. Without any general object he followed the course of the brook, which sometimes dashed over rocks and stones, and then flowed still and deep; but everywhere so clear, that it resembled liquid air, the slightest speck being visible upon the bottom. At intervals, he paused and watched the fish gliding so quietly and swiftly beneath the surface, their scales occasionally flashing like a ray of sunlight darting through the current.

A mile or two in this manner, brought him to a small clearing, which it could be instantly seen, had been the site of some building a few years before. The heavy logs were scattered hither and thither, blackened and charred, large stones were tumbled around, while a well was filled with dirt and debris, and a chilling air of desolation rested upon the entire scene.

A short distance away, was a large mound of earth, which resembled nothing so much as a large grave. Everything was silent, but the silence told an eloquent tale of the attack, the repulse, the siege, the burning building, the hand-to-hand struggle, the final defeat and massacre, and the return, perhaps months afterwards of a few of the survivors and the gathering and burial of the mutilated bodies.

Herbert Bingham stood a long time gazing upon these relics with a feeling of solemnity and sadness, much at



variance with his emotions when he first came upon the ruins. The reflection that it was so recent since these things had occurred, that but a few years only had passed since a building stood here, with so many hearts beating high with hope, and that this much was all left to remember them by, was calculated to alarm him for his own personal safety, and Herbert caught himself looking furtively around to see that no red man was stealing upon him unawares.

It was this natural apprehension which, perhaps more than anything, caused him to go as far away as possible from the spot and to engage more zealously than ever in the hunt. The occasional cry of a wild animal told him that he might expect their appearance at any moment, and he held himself constantly ready for any danger.

It was near noon, when he reached a broad smooth creek, which flowed quietly through a valley-like depression in the woods. He had just seated himself upon a fallen tree to rest himself, when he heard a singular purring barking noise, and the next moment detected two young panther cubs frolicking and tumbling upon the very edge of the creek. They resembled a couple of huge kittens, full to overflowing with spirit and animal life, not still for a moment.

While Herbert was watching them, he detected a bear advancing silently down the hill with his eyes fixed keenly upon them. Not suspecting any evil design, the boy let his rifle lie on his lap while with no little interest he watched their movements. The cubs paid no attention to the bear, while he advanced steadily forward, until he was directly upon them, when with one sweep of his paw he tore one of the cubs almost to shreds, laying it dead a dozen feet from him, partly on the land and partly in the water. Ere the other could comprehend the danger, it was served in almost the same manner, while the ruthless perpetrator of the cruelty looked savagely around as if in quest of something more upon which to exercise his brutality.

"That was unworthy of the wolf," remarked Herbert,



fairly enraged, at what he had witnessed, "and you shall never do it again."

With which he raised his gun and sighted for the head of the bear, but the next moment lowered it with a thrill of surprise.

But the bear was not to die by his hand; for glancing across the creek, he saw rapidly galloping down the hill the mother of the cubs, her whole body aflame with fury at the sight of the destroyer of her young. The rustling of the leaves caught the ear of the bear and glancing upward he gave a whine of terror, and would have turned to flee; but he stood at bay and awaited the onset.

"Now the fur will fly!" thought Herbert as he hastily finished reloading his gun and with sparkling eye watched the coming battle.

He had not long to wait. When a mother panther sees her young mangled to death before her eyes, she is not apt to wait long in the way of parrying or feinting. On came the infuriate animal straight to the bear, who stood with gleaming jaws suddenly awaiting the shock.

The next minute, they came in collision, with a momentum as if both were under full speed, and the lightning-like movements of the panther's claws, the snapping and snarling and growling, the biting, the hugging of the bear who quickly learned that he was hugging death to his vitals, the leaves that were scattered as if by whirl-wind—all these betokened the desperate character of the fight, and showed that it could last but a brief time.

Herbert had risen to his feet with his rifle in his hand, and forgetful of his own danger stood looking at the contestants as they engaged in their deadly struggle.

Such a contest, from its very nature, could not last long. The bear, although possessing prodigious strength was too sluggish in his movements to effectually to contest with the cat-like fierceness of the panther, and a few minutes only had elapsed, when the monster, ripped, bleeding and in his last throes, rolled into the creek, and still faintly struggling, rose and sank, dyeing the waters with his crimson life-current, until in a few seconds he was dead.



The panther, as if conscious that his work was finished, stood on the bank, glaring at the dead body which was floating away from him, while Herbert, at the termination of the contest exclaimed aloud :

" You deserve praise for the manner in which you vanquished your enemy, and you can go without any disturbance from me."

This was magnanimous upon the part of the boy, but the panther did not seem to appreciate it. When the youngster looked across the creek, he saw that the brute had fixed his terrible eyes upon him, and looked as if he was preparing to spring. The extraordinary agility of the animal would have made it an easy matter for him to leap the creek, and Herbert was well aware that the intervening water was not the slightest obstacle in his way.

Matters had assumed a new face, and placing his rifle at his shoulder, the boy held it ready for the first hostile demonstration of his enemy. The brute evidently looked upon him in the same light as he did the bear, and was not prepared in any way to reciprocate the feelings he had awakened in the youngster, while the latter, understanding that a collision was inevitable, with as steady a nerve as he could summon, was only waiting until he could make sure of his aim. He had one bullet at his disposal, and if that went astray, there was no probability of his escaping a sudden and fearful death.

The panther had crouched upon his belly, his claws pricking the earth in that restless way seen when a cat is about to spring, his tail slowly waving from side to side, his ears lying flat, his lips drawn back so as to display those carnivorous, spear-like teeth, his tongue and gums of the redness of blood, while his bright beautiful eyes were fixed upon the boy with steady fierceness, which seemed to emit a phosphorescent fire, and which he more than once dreaded would magnetize him by their subtle power.

A low growl issued from the vitals of the panther, and the next moment with a sudden lightning-like contraction of his muscles, he ascended in the air, as if gently propelled by some irresistible power, his limbs and body remaining as



motionless as if he were lying upon the ground. The rifle of the boy followed the brute, as it described its beautiful parabola as the gun of the sportsman frequently follows the bird an instant before firing, and when directly over the centre of the creek, he pulled the trigger.

A sort of shrieking growl was heard at the same second as the momentum of the animal, carried it forward, while Herbert, feeling that he had done all that was possible did not hesitate to turn on his heel and run for life. A terrific growling and rustling of the leaves, made him believe that the panther was pursuing, and was about to leap upon him; but it so, the leap was delayed, and when he had run several hundred yards, and glanced over his shoulder, nothing was to be seen of the dreaded animal. After awhile, he ventured to steal cautiously back, when he found it lying dead on the edge of the stream, where it had first struck when it leaped from the other side.

By this time, Herbert Bingham was convinced that he had enjoyed quite a hunt, and one which would justify him in returning home; but he was resolved not to show himself to his parents until nightfall. He saw by the position of the sun that it was past noon, and, if he had not possessed this infallible guide, he had an equally infallible one in the ravenous hunger, which demanded speedy satisfaction.

In such a bountiful store-house of game, as a western forest, there was no occasion for a hunter undergoing the sensation of hunger for any extended period, and the boy "barked" a couple of squirrels which were frolicking in a large red ash. This feat is done by striking the bark, directly beneath the squirrel in such a manner, that the concussion kills him without breaking the skin. It is an exploit of which a veteran hunter is proud, and it had required no little practice upon the part of our hero, before he was able to perform it. The squirrels were spitted over a fire kindled in the same manner as the others, and it required but a comparatively brief time to prepare himself a meal which no epicure could have envied.

The afternoon was quite well advanced, when Herbert



concluded he would start homeward, sauntering slowly along, so as not to reach there too soon, and late enough to make his parents rather anxious to see him. With this conclusion came the alarming discovery that he did not know which way to turn to reach home—that in his many turnings and ramblings, he had lost his reckoning, and had no more idea of the direction he should take in order to reach home, than if he had been blind.

His heart sank at this, but it would not do to be discouraged, and he endeavored with all the coolness possible to decide upon the proper course. He noted the situation of the sun—remembered in what direction it rose when viewed from his door at home, and where he had seen it go down so often behind the woods. The result of this computation was that it located his house in almost precisely the opposite point of the compass from the one which he had imagined. In fact, to use a common expression, he was “turned around.”

It was a hard matter to move in a direction contrary to the one which he felt to be right, but the boy had sense enough to comprehend there was nothing was more easy than to be mistaken, and so he concluded to go by the sun. In this he did right, although such being the case, it was by no means certain that he would come out of the woods within a half dozen miles of the clearing where stood the saw mill.

There was no occasion now for loitering by the way, and having located his house, he started off on a brisk walk toward it, only hoping that he would be able to get there by nightfall. It seemed to him that time never passed so rapidly: mile after mile was tramped through the same everlasting woods, the dead leaves rustling beneath his feet, the wind singing through the tree-tops, the squirrels frolicking everywhere, the call of the wild animals sometimes sounding near, and sometimes far in the distance, and still he saw no sight or landmarks which he could recognize.

It was with a sinking heart that he saw the night settling over the wood, with the feeling that he was lost. To



spend his previous night was rather a pleasure than otherwise, but it was far different now.

"If I must camp out ag'in, there is no helping it," was his reflection, as he halted beside a large tree trunk to make his preparations; but he was not willing to give up yet, and he began walking forward again. This he continued until, in the thick darkness, he found himself running against the limbs and trees, when he concluded it time to halt.

As the night was quite warm, he preferred ascending a tree to building a fire; and, selecting a large one with gnarled limbs and spreading branches, he climbed some twenty odd feet from the ground, and established himself as safely as possible. After composing himself to sleep, he found that the disappointment of not reaching home, and the anxiety as to what he would be able to accomplish on the morrow, had driven away both his appetite and all drowsiness. As the best that could be done under the circumstances, he set himself to shouting with all his might, and then listening for a response. His voice echoed dismally through the woods, but no answer came back.

Again and again he called, until weary and despairing he ceased, when at this instant, from directly beneath the tree, came the words:

"Hello! up there! what's the matter?"

The voice was gruff, and the words so unexpected, that Herbert was almost startled from his seat. He peered down among the limbs, but the darkness was too great to see anything; but believing that it could be no enemy, he made the somewhat trembling response:

"I am lost; and do not know which way to turn to get home."

"What is your name?"

"Herbert Bingham."

"Do you live near the saw-mill?"

"Yes, sir; my father owns the mill."

"You are a bright youngster, I must say; lost within a half-mile of your own house. I would advise your father to put you in a band-box, for fear you might stray off and



never be found again. Come down here, bab, and I'll take you home."

Herbert descended, and learned that his friend was a hunter, who had heard him calling, and who had not made any reply until assured as to whether there was any danger in doing so. When the boy had narrated his adventures, the man's surprise ceased that he should have lost his way, and he complimented him quite liberally upon the bravery he had shown.

A half hour later Herbert Bingham and his friend entered the door of his home, where, as may be supposed, his parents were glad enough to see them. They listened to the recital of their son's experience, when they returned thanks for the kindness of Providence, and all retired to rest.

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## CHAPTER VII.

**STUDIES—INDIAN VISITORS—THE YOUNG MILLER—A BEAR IN A SAW MILL!**

Under the guidance of his mother, Herbert Bingham progressed rapidly in his studies. Any boy with the will to go forward, cannot be kept back by difficulty; he may be rewarded, and sometimes driven almost to the verge of discouragement, but he will still advance until all opposition is overcome. Teachers are but one of the means by which the pupils are helped forward, and many of the first scholars of the present age are those who never saw the interior of a school house.

It needed but a word here and there—a little explanation—a single suggestion, or the simple "yes" or "no" to some inquiry, to keep the boy going. His mind was active, and with the occasional assistance of a pilot, it could not fail to find its goal. Herbert spent the greater part of the day in study, only taking care not to become so abstracted as to forget his duty in the saw-mill. A single minute of forgetfulness might shatter the saw to pieces, and Mr



Bingham had warned his son that if any such thing happened, every book should be instantly taken from him.

This penalty was too fearful for Herbert to incur, and no matter how deeply absorbed in his work, he did not fail to take note of every inch which the saw advanced into the log, and so long as he was thus faithful in the attendance of his duty, no objections could be made to his application to his studies.

Occasionally, however, his mother took his books from him, when, after having pored over them all day, he still endeavored to study them by the light of the fire on the hearth, or by the pine knot blazing overhead; and, when the father thought his cheek was becoming pale, he gave him a run through the woods with his gun.

Mr. Bingham marked off a tract of land which he intended to claim as his own, and then he set to work with all his strength to clear it. The demands upon the mill being such as to keep it continually going, he turned it over to the care of Herbert, only visiting him at intervals, to assure himself that he was not checked by any task beyond his strength.

Mr. Bingham then succeeded in securing the services of a man to help him, and, from morn till night, the ring of their axes could be heard. It was too late in the season to put any crops in the ground, and so everything was directed toward getting ready for the next Spring.

The sleep of labor is sweet, and both Mr. Bingham and his wife felt that they had now experienced the pure enjoyment of thus toiling to make for themselves a new home. Quiet, dreamless slumber was their blessing, and keen appetite, rugged health, and the inevitable accompaniment, cheerful spirits, followed them through the day.

Herbert was not less happy. His looks were a source of never-failing delight, and he had a mother who was capable of directing him in his studies. The only trouble was that sometimes she wouldn't let him read and study as much as he wished, but his conscience and common sense told him she was right about this, as she was about everything else; and then it gave him so much keener zeal when



he took up his studies again, that he could not regret the deprivation he had undergone.

Thus matters progressed until Summer had passed, and Autumn had begun. Herbert was at work continually in the mill, while his father and the hired man, John, worked as unceasingly in clearing the land. Everything was progressing favorably—nothing in their prospects could have been improved.

One day Herbert had just started the saw into the log, when shadows were thrown over the trunk at which he was looking; and, raising his head, he was not a little startled to observe three Indians, standing before him. His first impulse was to call to his father for help, but, as he saw nothing very threatening in the appearance of his visitors, he restrained himself, and gave them a friendly nod.

At the same time, he looked furtively across the clearing for his father. The sound of his axe and of the hired man's could be heard, and he knew precisely where they were; but they were beyond sight, and if the Indians really intended harm, they had nothing to fear from the settlers. The house was several hundred yards away, and he greatly preferred that his mother should know nothing of what was going on at the mill, as she could afford no assistance, if it should be needed.

The Indians stood surveying the saw with no attempt to conceal their amazement. They had never seen anything like it, and seemed totally unable, for the time, to comprehend its meaning. Deeming it best to treat them as friends, Herbert walked around to where they stood, and offered them his hand in friendly greeting. It was taken rather reluctantly, and one of them uttered an exclamation, and pointed to the saw.

By this time it was near the end of the log, and he motioned to them to take a seat upon the "carriage." One of them complied rather gingerly, whereupon the boy reversed the action; but, as it began sliding back, the Indian, with a half shriek of terror, sprang up, as though he had seated himself upon red hot iron.

Herbert now shut off the water entirely, and when the



saw, with its sharp triangular teeth stood still, his visitors ventured to approach and examine it more critically. They placed their fingers upon the iron, and seemed to admire its gleaming smoothness, and then they felt of the teeth.

"Oogh! much bite!" said one of them in broken English.

"Yes," replied Hubert.

They then peered down into the lower part, and the sight of the large band wrapped around the huge wheel, and running to the smaller one, was a source of still greater surprise to them. They passed to and fro like so many children out on a holiday, and asked all sorts of questions; but, as they were propounded in pantomime, and not in the least understood it cannot be supposed that they received very satisfactory or lucid answers.

Having adjusted everything, Herbert motioned to the most inquisitive visitor to place his hand upon a certain handle and pull. The latter did so rather timidly, when instantly there was a great rush of water, and the terrified savage gazed about him as though he had sealed his own doom beyond all escape.

Herbert soon became on good terms with his visitors. He showed them every part of the wonderful saw-mill with as much pride and pleasure as a good farmer displays his expectant crops to the speculator. What their intentions were when they approached him—whether to gratify a simple curiosity, or whether they intended evil—can never be known—but certain it is, that they departed without the least indication of violence, and with every evidence of good will.

The boy drew a long breath when they finally disappeared in the woods, and he felt that buoyancy of spirits which comes over one when he has done a good deed and gained a good victory. He was satisfied that the Indians had left him with friendly feelings, a different state of the emotions, he ever believed, than were those with which they came to him.

The Indians did not go near the house, and it was rather singular that Mr. Bingham nor his servant received any in-



mination of their visit until it came from the boy himself. The father recommended the action of his son, and took particular care in locking his house that evening, but for some time saw nothing more of any aborigines.

So great was the demand upon the saw-mill, that it was kept running from earliest morn until dark, and frequently far into the night; but there was a gloominess when it was dark in remaining about the building, which made this the exception rather than the rule. But Herbert frequently carried his dinner to the mill in a small basket, so that there was no interruption on account of his noonday meal.

On one of these occasions his mother placed in his basket the choicest part of a fat turkey, which his father had shot the day before in the woods, and, in order that he might fully enjoy it, Herbert concluded to wait until past noon, so as to be sure of a good appetite.

Meridian came and passed, and the boy took up an arithmetic, and soon became deeply interested in it, until sensible of a craving and increasing hunger, when he laid it aside, and took down his basket from its perch. He then waited until just after the saw commenced the log, when he seated himself about midway on it, and attacked his dinner.

He carefully drew up the breast of the turkey, and was admiringly contemplating it, when he heard a singular jarring noise behind him, and turning his head, saw an enormous black bear tumbling awkwardly toward him. There was mischief in his eye, and pausing only long enough to identify him, the boy sprang off the log, and in a twinkling had scrambled up among the framework above.

The bear came along very leisurely, sniffing and looking around him, almost with as much curiosity as did the Indians upon their visit. He was not long in scenting the luscious turkey which had been left lying upon the log beside the open basket; and, stepping upon the log, he sat on his haunches, with his back toward the saw and commenced leisurely devouring the contents of the dinner basket.



Hubert Bingham watched him with curious emotions. He was not forgetful of the fact that he was not perched six feet above the head of the bear, and when the latter had finished his feast, he would undoubtedly turn and take him by way of dessert. The boy had no ready means of defence, and he began to be seriously alarmed for his own safety.

As the best thing that could be done under the circumstances, he shouted at the top of his voice; but he remembered that, having deferred his dinner beyond the usual time, both his father and hired man were beyond hearing. As it was, he was barely able to make his voice rise above the clash and clangor of the mill, and he had some fear, too, that it would excite the animal, and cause him to turn his attention to him.

A new fear now took possession of the boy. In a few moments, at the furthest, the saw must reach the end of the log, and then what would become of it? With no one to reverse the motion, it must cut straight ahead until it was shattered and ruined against the clamps of iron with which he secured the logs in their places.

This thought troubled Herbert Bingham more than anything else. He knew that his father had another saw, but each was too valuable for him to lose, except by the use to which it was put; and he could not bear the thought that this was doomed to be ruined.

But what could he do? It wasn't probable that the brute would retire, that he might descend and save the property from ruin, and he had no means at hand to compel him to do so. With a sinking heart he drew himself up, and painfully watched the progress of events.

Oh how he longed for his gun, which he had occasionally brought to the mill with him. How quickly he would terminate this distressing condition of affairs. What an easy matter it would be for him to topple over the brute as he sat in all his ungainly hugeness upon the log, so deliberately devouring his dinner.

Suddenly, the question presented itself to Hubert—could



he not stealthily descend, and as stealthily shut off the flow of water, and clamber back to his perch before the brute could become aware of what he was doing? Thus far the animal treated him with the utmost indifference, not even glancing upward to assure himself as to his exact locality. If he could only extend this indifference a little further, the boy was confident the thing could be done.

The youngster was on the point of descending, when he hesitated, and a smile spread over his face. The bear having eaten the better part of the dinner, was now snuffing and clawing at Daboll's arithmetic (that venerable and, fortunately for us, completely decayed treatise on numbers), as though disposed to investigate its contents.

"If you can digest those two or three examples I have been studying over," muttered Herbert to himself, "you will do more than any bear that I ever heard of."

After he had gotten the book exactly in front of him, he clawed at it until it opened, and then, little dreaming of the pangs he inflicted on a certain young gentleman a few feet over his head, he clawed a couple of leaves from it. They stuck to his paws a moment, and, in considerable terror the brute shook them off.

"My gracious! don't tear the leaves out of the back part," called Herbert in his frantic forgetfulness, terrified at the thought that he was on the point of losing one of his most valued books.

Fortunately, at this juncture, the injured book, with the mangled leaves, dropped off the log, and the brute bestowed no further notice upon them.

Again the question came back to our young hero: could he not steal down, cautiously shut off the water, and then get back to his perch before his enemy suspected what he was doing? Several times, indeed, he more than half believed that he was not aware he was in the mill, judging from his actions since entering the building.

The attempt which Herbert Bingham was meditating was so dangerous, that he determined upon another effort as offering less peril to himself. He could descend until directly over the lever connected with the water-wheel, when



he could reach down with his foot and shut down the gate.

As time was becoming precious, he acted upon the conclusion without further delay. As the bear sat, his side was turned toward the handle which Herbert was so anxious to reach, and the chances seemed equally divided as to whether he would be discovered at the attempt or not. At present he was absorbed in, or more properly, was absorbing into his massive jaws another piece of the tender turkey, so carefully cooked by the affectionate mother at home.

Herbert crept carefully along the framework until he had reached the proper spot, all the time glancing at the brute, which as yet was entirely indifferent as to what was going on around him. The clangor created by the saw was an advantage, in that it drowned whatever noise might accidentally be made in his movements.

The boy once more looked sharply at the bear, and thinking everything looked favorable he cautiously reached his foot down until it rested upon the upright level. Then he made a sudden push with it, came near losing his balance, and found that he could not stir it. It took quite a vigorous effort to remove the heavy gates, and he labored at too great disadvantage in his efforts to do so.

Unwilling to give up a task which appeared so unobjectionable to his enemy, Herbert prepared to repeat the attempt. Reaching carefully down with his foot, he made another desperate push, but it could avail nothing, and he was compelled reluctantly to give over the attempt.

While the boy sat debating with himself whether to descend and grasp the handle with both hands, and trust to his own nimbleness to escape, the affair took upon itself an entirely new and unexpected character. But a few minutes had elapsed since the first alarm, although the time seemed far longer to him who was most concerned.

The bear sat with his back toward the saw, which all this time was advancing upon him. All at once it nipped his tail, and with an angry growl, he hitched along; the saw did the same, and scarce a minute elapsed when it gave him



another twitch. More enraged than ever, bruin threw his head round and gave a threatening growl, as if to warn the audacious intruder that no further liberties would be permitted, while at the same time he took a position with his side turned toward it, his immense body pulsating like so much jelly, with each pelt of the log.

Steadily as ever the saw advanced, until at the proper second, it gave a sharp scratch in his haunch, followed immediately by a severer one. Thoroughly infuriated, the bear now whirled around, and throwing his paws about the saw, began a fierce contest with it, biting, clawing and tearing at the iron which was more effectually doing the same for him, until his blood streamed over the log, and he was wounded nigh unto death.

## CHAPTER VIII.

END OF THE FIGHT BETWEEN THE BEAR AND SAW—EMIGRATION—A HUNT IN THE WOODS—A HUNTER TREED BY A BEAR—TIMELY ARRIVAL OF HERBERT—A NEW FRIEND.

The bear grappled and struggled with the saw which was tearing its way into his vitals, as if it were an animal of the woods with which he was engaged. There can be but little doubt as to the end of this singular combat, had not the sharp crack of a rifle sounded above the clamor of growls and crunching saw, and the bear toppled off the log an inanimate body, while Mr. Bingham sprang forward and shut off the flow of water before any material injury was done to his saw.

"Before you take a partner in the business, I would suggest that you consult me," he laughed, as his son clambered down from his perch.

"I shall surely do so," replied Herbert, "if he comes in that style."

Perseverance brings its reward. That which at first sight seems impossible, gives way to unremitting effort;



continual dropping wears away stones, and the tiny stream of water trickling through the bank, opens the channel for the mighty river. So it is with the mind; it gathers strength from repeated efforts until it accomplishes wonders. Herbert Bingham found himself progressing steadily, and, as he progressed, his mind expanded and reached after other truths.

Summer, Autumn and Winter passed, and emigration flowed westward with an ever-increasing current. Flat-boats were continually descending the Ohio, and the emigrants sometimes came through the woods from other directions, some following the celebrated "Boone's Trace," while a few seemed to aim to "cut across," oblivious of the double difficulties thus encountered.

In the six months succeeding the first visit of Mr. Bingham to Riverton, the place increased over one third of its size. That was a memorable year in the history of emigration to the West; and when Spring came, a half dozen cabins were rising within sight of the saw-mill, and the miller began to suspect that when he located here, he laid the foundation of a town, whose vigorous infancy had already begun.

This was a belief as pleasant to his family as to himself. There was a sense of security surrounded by his own people which he had not felt until now; and the society of friends was pleasant and grateful to his wife who had so long been deprived of them. Herbert also found companions, but for that matter, none of them could equal the companionship of his books, although he did enjoy an occasional ramble through the woods with them.

We need hardly say that the saw-mill enjoyed no rest, except that which was forced upon it in the filing of its teeth, and, now and then, the doctoring of some of its organs, which had been racked rather severely. Then, too, its existence was more than once seriously imperilled. In the Spring came a freshet, so violent that neither the sluic-gate nor that of the mill could afford an adequate escape. The result was that a portion of the dam was carried



away, which, though a seeming calamity in itself, was the salvation of the mill.

Precisely the same thing occurred a month later, when, with the assistance of his friends he constructed an escape gate amply sufficient for any pressure of water to which the bank could be subjected. The capacity of the mill was not sufficient to supply the wants of the settlers, and many of them created log houses, contenting themselves with the prospect of securing lumber for more prepossessing dwellings at some future time.

Riverton being only three miles up the river, there was constant communication between the two places. A path was formed through the woods, and no walk could be more delightful than this on a fair Spring morning, or during the sultry Summer weather. There was a coolness beneath the impenetrable shadow of the trees—an exuberance of vegetation that made it grateful to the wearied, languid body. And there was the occasional sight of the timid deer, or the fierce wild animal, or, perhaps, the American Indian in his gaudy, fantastical dress, which gave a wild beauty to the scene, and made it one belonging peculiarly to our own country.

One day, in the Autumn of the year succeeding that in which the saw-mill was erected, Herbert concluded to take a ramble in the woods with his gun, leaving the mill in charge of the hired man, who, having toiled so long and faithfully with Mr. Bingham, had gained a little recreation in this way. The Binghams had never owned any dog, and Hubert went forth entirely alone.

The air was crisp and clear, and there was an elasticity about his young and healthful frame which made this hunt the keenest enjoyment, and he knew there was plenty of game in the woods to keep him busy if he choose to spend a month there. So he told his mother not to expect him back until nightfall, and, shouldering his gun, he bade them a cheerful good-bye, and plunged into the forest.

With no particular object in view, Herbert took a direction toward Riverton, sauntering aimlessly forward, ready for any game that offered, but not particularly disposed to



turn out of his path to seek it. When about half way to the settlement, he turned to the left, and wandered up the banks of a small stream which crossed the path. Numbers of birds darted up before, and sped out of sight with a whirring noise, while the rabbits and squirrels were constantly in sight; but the hunter was in quest of nobler game, and he scarcely noticed these.

Fully one half of the forenoon had passed, and still there was nothing seen of deer, when he finally paused on the edge of the stream. Kneeling down, he slaked his thirst with the icy cold water, and then began to consider whether it was best to ascend the brook any higher, or change his direction. He was thus occupied, when he observed that the brook had suddenly become soiled and ruddy, while at the same time a plashing reached his ears, as if made by some creature dabbling in it.

"There must be something to do that," was his conclusion, "and I've no doubt I'll get the shot I've been looking for ever since I started."

Saying which, he arose and began cautiously ascending the stream, but had taken scarcely a dozen steps when the near report of a rifle reached his ears, followed by a furious rushing, as though something was tearing through the brush and undergrowth at the top of its speed. While he was still wondering what it could mean, a terrified voice reached his ear.

"Help! help! quick! quick! or I am lost!"

Herbert dashed straight toward the point from whence came the cry of help, and whose sudden cessation, he feared, meant that help was already too late. But hurrying forward a few hundred yards, he quickly discovered an explanation of the clamor which had reached his ears so startlingly. A fleshy man, who evidently had little experience in hunting, judging from his dress and actions, had fired his gun at a large bear, which he had only wounded, whereupon the brute had turned upon him, and throwing away his gun, he had run for dear life.

Like many persons, when panic-struck, the frightened man did the very thing he ought to have avoided. Instead



of springing up a sapling, and climbing beyond reach, he caught hold of the limb of an enormous oak, and ensconced himself among the branches. He had scarcely done so, however, when, to his horror, he saw the bear climbing after him. It was at this juncture that he uttered those piercing cries for help which caught the ear of Herbert Bingham.

When the latter reached the tree, the fleshy hunter was on the topmost limb, ready to spring to the ground when his pursuer came too near. The limb was already swaying with its unusual weight, and it was more than probable that when the bear placed his paws upon it, the whole thing, including man and brute, would come tumbling to the ground.

In this critical state of affairs, the hunter caught sight of the boy below him, and called out:

"Will you do me the favor, my friend, to knock this unmannerly brute off the limb? He is coming uncomfortably close."

"I will do it," replied Herbert, "but I must make my aim sure, for I have no time to re-load."

Herbert waited until certain of his aim, and then sighting at the point directly behind his fore-leg pulled the trigger. The colossal brute instantly tumbled from the branch, with a terrific growling and clawing of the leaves, and striking the earth heavily, expired with a few convulsive struggles.

The moment the bear fell, the man came hurrying down the tree, his clothes suffering considerably during the process. Dropping upon the ground he caught the hand of the boy, and wrung it very cordially.

"Boy, you have been the means of saving my life!" he exclaimed, his heart overflowing with gratitude.

"Next time you are chased by a bear," returned Herbert, somewhat embarrassed, "climb a small tree instead of a large one."

"And why so?"

"Because a bear can't climb a small tree, and he can't climb a large one. If you had gone up a sapling instead of the oak



you did. you would never have been placed in such danger."

"But my thankfulness to you remains the same. Let me inquire your name."

"Herbert Bingham; I live near the saw-mill, which, if you listen carefully, you may hear running this minute."

"I have heard of you! I have heard of you!" said the stranger, quite hastily, as he busied himself in brushing and putting to rights—so far as was possible—his dilapidated clothes. "I have heard of you, I say, and it has been a good report. I am right glad to make your acquaintance. But I threw my gun away when the bear took after me; suppose we go back and look for it. I confess it don't look as though a gun was of much use to me, but nevertheless, I can hardly afford to lose it."

They walked along toward the rifle, which could be seen gleaming among the leaves, the stranger talking very freely.

"I suppose you do not know me?"

"I do not remember that I have ever seen you," replied Herbert, certain that they had never met before.

"I am John R. Brandon, and moved into Riverton only last week. I started out to day to take a look at the country, and I have certainly gained quite a vivid idea of its inhabitants," remarked Mr. Brandon, with a laugh.

"Won't you accompany me home?"

"I thank you; I am hardly in a presentable condition; but I shall take the earliest occasion to call upon you. Depend upon it, I shall never forget the service you have done me."

"I am sure I have done nothing more than I would have done for another person, and no more than you would have done for me under such circumstances."

"That is if I could have aimed well enough—but you talk to me like a boy who has received quite an education."

"I cannot say as to that; I have studied a good deal, but the most that I can learn, it seems to me, doesn't amount to anything."

"A good sign—a good sign; deliver me from those



youngsters who imagine themselves smart and educated, when they haven't yet learned enough to comprehend that they know nothing."

Herbert was at a loss what to say; his companion was so communicative, and talked with such fluency that he hardly knew how to reply to him. There was a certain frankness about him which pleased the boy, and Mr. Brandon succeeded finally in "drawing out" his young friend. The latter told him what books he studied, which were his favorites, and how much he longed for the opportunity of acquiring a good education.

Mr. Brandon listened with great interest to what he said, and when he had finished, he replied:

"Well, Herbert, you will find me plain spoken, perhaps you may some times think me quite blunt; but what I say and do shall be for your own good. I will remark that, aside from the inestimable service you have rendered me, I like your appearance and manner."

Herbert thanked him for his good opinion, and expressed the hope that he might always merit it. Mr. Brandon had picked up his rifle, and they now walked slowly down the bed of the stream until they reached the main path, where they paused for a few parting words.

"I am a lawyer from the city of Philadelphia, where I have practiced for a dozen years. I have come to Riverton with the intention of settling there. I have no family nor friends with me. I would like to have you enter my office, and take up the study of law with me. It shall cost you nothing; it will be a pleasure for me to direct you; come and see me; good-bye."

Mr. Brandon turned on his heel, and walked toward Riverton, while Herbert Bingham sauntered homeward, his mind filled with thoughts of the new project which his strangely-formed friend had given him.

He walked along the path mechanically, not noticing his footsteps, and lost in delightful reverie, until he was brought to a stand-still by an angry growl; and, raising his head, he saw that if he had advanced a dozen steps further, the



appalling danger which confronted him would have been fatal!

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## CHAPTER IX.

THE WILD CAT—A CALL UPON HIS NEW FRIEND—A NEW PROJECT—AN APPALLING DANGER TO THE SETTLEMENT.

That peril in Herbert Bingham's path was in the shape of a wild cat. It stood, or rather, was walking slowly toward him, its eyes glowing, its fang-like teeth displayed, spitting, growling, with its fur erect, and an appearance of the most furious rage. This condition was explained by the presence of a couple of kittens—if the expression be allowable—frollicking behind it. The maternal instinct led it thus to meet, half-way, the danger which threatened its young.

Herbert could have shot it, but in pity for the offspring, he resolved not to harm the mother, unless compelled to do so in self-defence. Accordingly, he began walking backward, keeping his eye fixed upon the wild cat, and the hammer of his rifle raised, so as to be ready for any demonstration upon the part of the brute. The latter followed him some distance, until the fear of deserting its young checked it, where it paused, and still snarling and growling, glared at him until a curve in the path hid him from sight. Herbert then made a circuit, and came into the path at a point so far beyond his new acquaintances that there was no danger of interruption from them.

The singular meeting between Mr. Brandon and Herbert Bingham was one of those occurrences which mark an era in a human life. As he made his way homeward, he could not but reflect upon his parting words, and they gave him such a pleasure as he had never experienced. It seemed as if Providence was leading him onward and upward.

When he had reached home, and all were gathered around the table in the evening, he related his adventure of the day, expressing a wish that he might call upon his new



friend on the morrow; but Mrs. Bingham, with her usual good sense, advised him to wait until he could frame some suitable excuse for going to Riverton, as she deemed it wiser at the beginning of their friendship that he should not presume too much upon it.

Two days wore slowly away, and then Mrs. Bingham made an errand for her son, and sent him to Riverton, with a suggestion to make his call upon Mr. Brandon quite brief, as that gentleman doubtless had other matters claiming his attention. Herbert saw the wisdom of what his mother said, and promised compliance.

When he entered Riverton, he was struck more forcibly than ever before with the rapid growth and the future prospect of the place. The emigration, which had remained in a state of comparative stagnation for a number of years, had within the present year taken a new impetus, and Riverton could not fail soon to reach the dimensions of a town, and eventually of a goodly-sized city.

As Herbert walked down the main street, looking from side to side for the residence of Mr. Brandon, almost the first object that met his eye was a neatly-painted sign of the law office of his friend. As he stepped upon the rude porch, his heart throbbed, and with a trembling hand he knocked at the partly open door.

It was promptly opened by Mr. Brandon himself, who grasped the hand of his visitor, and made him so cordially welcome that he felt at ease at once. A great surprise awaited Herbert as he entered the lawyer's office, for on one side of the room stood a broad high book-case, every shelf of which was filled with good, portly volumes, handsomely bound. He had never seen such a collection of works, and when he looked at his host it was with the certainty that he must be one of the happiest men living.

Both being seated, Mr. Brandon asked regarding his friends and himself—some of his questions being rather pointed and direct—after which he inquired as to the studies which he had been pursuing, and the books which he had read during the last year. Having learned this, the lawyer then tested his knowledge of each subject, by a



number of general questions, sufficient to indicate whether he had bestowed much thought upon them. From the searching character of these queries, Herbert saw that his man was thoroughly conversant with everything which he had read himself, and he was inspired with a deeper sense than ever of his profound attainments.

Having satisfied himself on these points, Mr. Brandon took a different tack.

"Undoubtedly your mind is inclined to study," he observed, "and you only need directing, and occasionally a little assistance. My friend, you have the greatest blessing a boy can have."

"What is that?" inquired Herbert, as his host made a slight pause.

"A noble mother; she has instilled into your mind the best precepts and the purest maxims which can govern one's life. She has laid the foundation of a good, sound education and, with your permission, I shall begin to build upon that foundation."

Herbert smiled, and waited for him to make his meaning clear.

"You are cut out for a lawyer, to use a common expression, and, with the consent of your parents, you must consider yourself from this time forth as under my special charge. You are yet, perhaps, too young to begin the study of law proper, but you can begin a course of preparatory reading."

Mr. Brandon arose, and took down a volume from his book case.

"Here is a work which may, perhaps, interest you not quite so much as some that you have been reading, but, nevertheless, it is important that you should read and digest it. Please look at it, and tell me how many pages you can read a day."

Herbert turned the leaves over a few moments, saw that it was a historical work, and then answered:

"I think I can read twenty of those pages very well."

"I don't want you to do any such thing; you have mentioned just four times as much as you ought to read. That



is the fault of childhood, that it is too often content to skim over the surface of things. I want you to read five pages in the forenoon, and spend the rest of the day and evening in thinking about it, endeavoring to recall every point that has been touched upon. The next day read five pages more, and do the same. On the third day read over these ten pages, and come to me in the afternoon, and we will spend an hour or two in talking about them."

"You do not mean that I shall come twice every week to see you?"

"That is precisely what I mean."

"For how long a time?"

"About two years; when, if nothing occurs to prevent, you will be quite well prepared to take up the study of law."

"But"—

"Well, what is it?"

Herbert wished to express his gratitude, but did not know how to do so. His friend saved him the trouble.

"I suppose you wish to say you are thankful; well, you ought to feel so, though not so deeply as I did when you hit that bear so neatly. You see, you are yet young enough, and I wish to lead you through a course of training. You are not yet prepared to take up the study of law, but, as I remarked, by a couple of years, I think you can be ready."

"I hope I shall prove able."

"That depends upon yourself. There is no excellence without great labor, is my favorite maxim. Lawyers are a sort of necessary evil in the community," laughed Mr. Brandon, "and we must do what we can to make them as bearable as possible."

Herbert could but consent to the truth of this remark.

"Let me say to you, my friend, that there is a glorious future before you; you can see how the West is growing; you should identify yourself with this territory, grow up with it, and let its interests be your own, and you will find that your country will not be ungrateful. Providence has placed you in the field, He has given you the ability, and



It now rests with you to improve these opportunities. If you fail, remember you fail through your own remissness."

"I can say that if it depends upon that, I shall succeed."

"I hope so—I hope so; it is easy to form a good resolution; it is another thing to carry it out. It is a peculiarity of childhood that it is impulsive, and that scarce a day passes over a boy's head which does not witness a new resolution, and the breaking of an old one."

"I don't think it will be so with me."

"I trust not; when you take up a work to read or study, you must concentrate your mind upon it—don't wander off into day-dreams and imaginings of what you are going to do when you reach man's estate; *work, work, WORK*, that is what you have to do."

"I have always been taught that"

"One of our most brilliant men in Congress, last Summer told me that he had gained his success in his profession most from a habit which he had formed quite young. He never started out upon a walk or ramble without first deciding in his mind what he should think upon while thus engaged. Having decided upon this, he concentrated all his mental energies upon that one subject, to the exclusion of everything else. I believe there is a good deal in that; and let me commend the habit to you. You will find it will eventually improve the mind, and make you ready and keen upon any subject that is brought to your attention."

The hour had whiled away so rapidly that Herbert started up with the thought that he had overstead the proper time, and he made an apology for doing so.

"Never mind," said Mr. Brandon, "to-day is Wednesday; come again to me on Saturday, and we will discuss the first ten pages of the work I have given you. Remember and follow my directions to the letter. I have some labor that claims my attention, and I will therefore bid you good afternoon."

As Herbert Bingham passed out of Mr. Brandon's office, he was so deeply in meditation that, for a time, he did not notice an unusual excitement in the little settlement; but



it was so great, and was spreading so rapidly, that it could not fail to attract his attention. He saw Colonel Ringgold run hurriedly to the block-house, and the next moment an acquaintance suddenly dashed up to him.

"Hello, Herbert! how long ago did you leave home?"

"Several hours."

"Then you haven't heard the news."

"No; what is it?"

"A thousand Shawances and Miamis have crossed over from Kentucky to attack the place!"

Herbert's heart seemed to stop beating at this appalling intelligence, and, choking down his emotions as much as possible, he inquired for a few particulars; but his informer was in a great hurry, and turned off to make sure that his own family was safe.

The boy ran hither and thither, and finally succeeded in checking a man who knew something about the matter, long enough to gain some idea of the danger. A hunter had come in about half an hour previous, and reported that he saw a large number of Indians crossing from Kentucky in their canoes.

He watched them long enough to see to what tribes they belonged, and to understand that they were in their war-paint, and that they were moving with all dispatch against the Saw-Mill—as the collection of houses down the river was popularly known. Observing that they were a numerous and powerful party, this hunter had made all haste to Riverton to warn Colonel Ringgold of his peril.

The latter, with a sort of grim pleasure at this proof of his wisdom in keeping the block-house in continual preparation, ordered the women and children to take refuge in the building, while the men armed themselves, and made everything ready for the expected assault. This done, he sent out a number of men to keep him posted regarding the movements of his enemies.

Herbert was in distressing perplexity as to whether he should remain in Riverton or hurry home. Prudence told him to do the former, but he could not bear the thought of being away from his home when his people were in danger.



He had failed to bring his gun with him for the first time since he had ever come away from home, and now when he tried to borrow one, found it impossible. Every person expected to have use for his own weapon.

Colonel Ringgold, fearing that his neighbors down the river were in great danger, selected twenty of his most reliable men, and placing them under a good leader sent them off to render what assistance lay in their power. As the best that could be done, Herbert joined these, though several warned him of the danger of doing so.

Plunging into the woods, the company made all haste toward their beleaguered friends, their footsteps materially quickened by the fact that they could now hear the cracking of rifles and those dreadful whoops and yells to which the American Indian gives vent when attacking an enemy.



## CHAPTER X.

**THE INDIAN ATTACK AND REPULSE—MR. BRANDON'S VISIT—HERBERT'S PROFESSION CHOSEN—PROGRESS—HUGA STRAKLE.**

As the party reached the vicinity of the settlement, they proceeded with great caution. The reports of rifles for a time were quite fierce and rapid and then they ceased almost as suddenly as they began, with the exception of now and then a random one. Several of the more daring hunters hurried forward into the clearing, but were gone but a few minutes when they rushed back, pale with excitement.

"The Indians have set fire to the mill, and are retreating!"

The entire company now dashed forward at the top of their speed. As they reached the clearing, they were compelled to run through a corn-field before they could gain a view of the buildings, when the first sight that met their eyes was the flames bursting through the upper part of the saw-mill.

"Quick! a lot of you bring water, while we give 'em a parting shot!" commanded the leader, hurrying toward the river, where a number of the Indians could be seen embarking in their canoes.

Herbert deeming the salvation of the mill of more importance than that of revenging themselves upon their aggressors, headed the few who proceeded to dip water from the pond and dash it upon the blazing boards. It was an extremely difficult task to subdue the flames, as the planks upon the roof had become seasoned, and burned with great fierceness, although the lower part of the building was quite green, and was much less combustible.

As the rest of the party reached the river, they found



the last canoe shoving off. The Indians perceiving them, believed they were the advance of large reinforcements, and made all haste to get beyond their reach; but the pursuers, uttering yells as terrific as those of the red men, fired as fast as they could re-load and aim, and here and there the answering outcry and the spasmodic throwing up of the arms, and in one or two cases the springing overboard of the aggressors, showed that many of these shots were taking fatal effect.

The attack, the contest and retreat was one of those sudden things for which the Indians became so famous during the border wars. In a few moments after the arrival of our friends, they had reached the Kentucky shore, plunged into the woods and were seen no more.

Then the settlers, besieged for the short time, came forth and greeted their friends. It was found on examination that three of their number were missing, they not having had time to reach shelter before the savages were upon them. One of these made his appearance shortly after the departure of their enemies, with the sad announcement that his two companions had been carried away. As they were never seen afterward, there can be little doubt of their fate.

The approach of the Shawanees and Miamis had been accidentally discovered before they reached the Ohio bank, and the people at once rushed into their houses, and secured the doors and windows for defence. The time was so short that they barely had time to do this when their dusky foes landed, and began a fierce attack. They divided into two parties, one of which made a rush at Mr. Bingham's house, but were unable to force the door inward, while the other party were defeated in like manner in their assault upon another building.

They fired at the windows and openings, and many narrow escapes occurred. The thousand Indians of the frightened settler who gave Herbert the information, proved to consist of something less than a hundred. Had they dared to remain the entire day on the Ohio River and prosecute the assault, there can be but little doubt of their final suc-



cess; but, fearful of molestation from above the river, they staid less than an hour, and, short as was that time it has been seen that it served for Colonel Ringgold's men to give them a taste of their temper before they got away.

As may well be supposed, Mr. Bingham and his wife were greatly concerned for the safety of Herbert, fearing that he would return and not discover his peril until too late for him to escape. Great, therefore, was the gratitude of all when they were reunited, unharmed.

As this foray of the Shawanees and Miamis was a most flagrant violation of their treaty, steps were taken to discover and punish the marauders; but, as usual in such cases, it resulted in nothing, except in an extraordinary vigilance upon the settlers along the Ohio for a long time afterward.

The mill, and such of the houses as had been injured, were soon repaired, and the place took upon itself its usual look. Labor was resumed, although, as has just been remarked, the people were unusually careful. There was not a building which did not bear the marks of the Indian bullets, and these were often pointed out, long years afterward, as mementoes of the last and only incursion the place ever suffered from the red men.

Despite the distracting circumstances surrounding him, Herbert Bingham found the time to follow out the instructions of Mr. Brandon; and, when he visited his office on Saturday, and gave him a succinct account of the visit of the Indians, the latter, after complimenting his coolness, said:

"I presume you have hardly been in a condition for study."

"I have done what I could."

"Well, I shall soon see."

The lawyer took the book in his hand, and ran his eye over the pages a few minutes to assure himself regarding their contents. He then closed it, laid it down, and began a series of questions upon it, which seemed to Herbert to comprehend the pith of every paragraph in the book. He



answered him very well, but not nearly as well as he was certain of doing when he had entered his office.

"A pretty good recitation," commented Mr. Brandon, "pretty good, considering the disadvantages under which you labored, but there is room for improvement, which I am sure you will make. Be thorough."

Herbert was disappointed. He had been positive that he understood his lesson perfectly, but the rigid examination of his instructor had proved to him, as it seemed, that he knew nothing at all about it, and he was considerably mortified over the fact. A little judicious praise, however, from Mr. Brandon, made him feel more at ease, and he resolved to make amends in the future.

The next lesson was indeed an improvement. Herbert made himself so perfectly familiar with it that he could not be taken at fault, and Mr. Brandon was compelled to admit that it could not have been better.

"Now, the next question," said he, "is whether you are going to keep what you have got in your head. It is there now, but how long will it remain? Many a youngster knows perfectly his lesson to-day, but to-morrow remembers about half of it, and the next day has forgotten it entirely. I can't say whether this is to be the case with you or not."

"How am I to prevent it?" inquired Herbert.

"Easily enough; when to-morrow comes, don't dismiss the work of to-day from your mind. How is it you know how to run your saw-mill? Because you have tried, and tried, and practiced until you can't help understanding the process. It is the same way with your mind. Recall to-day what you learned yesterday, do the same to-morrow, then again in a few days, and then again in a week or so. In this way it will finally become so imbedded in your brain that it cannot be removed."

"I never have thought of such a process."

"It is the true one; the common practice of learning a thing and then forgetting it, is very hurtful and weakening to the memory. Unconsciously to yourself, you have strengthened your memory. Your range of studies being



limited, you have been compelled to go over them again and again, until they have been tolerably well learned."

Mr. Brandon was rather chary of his praise, but he doubtless deemed it best to be so. He evidently was no believer in the habit of constantly complimenting smart children, which so frequently injures them irreparably, although he did not hesitate to throw in a judicious word now and then by way of encouragement.

A few days after, Mr. Brandon took occasion to wander down to the saw-mill with his gun, and to make a call upon Mr. Bingham's family. The latter cordially received him, and he accepted an invitation to dinner, after which it was agreed that he and Herbert should spend the afternoon in hunting.

The intervening time was passed with Mr. Bingham himself, the two wandering around the settlement, while the precise manner of the Indian attack was explained, and the progress of the settlement carefully noted. Mr. Brandon was particularly interested in the saw-mill, which he examined in every part, and pronounced to be admirably constructed.

"You see, I owned one of these," he laughed, as he emerged from the lower part. "It was built along the Susquehanna, and the better part of my boyhood was spent in running it, so I think I ought to be able to judge."

Mr. Bingham admitted his qualifications in this respect, after which the conversation turned upon Herbert. The lawyer stated that he was a very talented and promising boy, and it was his wish to have charge of his education. The father replied that they were truly grateful for his kindness to their child and he and his wife had decided to place him entirely under his direction. Mr. Brandon said that was all he wanted, and straightway changed the conversation to some other subject.

In the afternoon, as agreed upon, the lawyer and his pupil shouldered their guns and wandered away in the woods. They spent the remainder of the day pleasantly, and when they returned toward evening, were loaded with game. Mr. Brandon had not the time to remain to tea, as



he wished to pass through the intervening woods before there was danger of losing his path in the darkness. Accordingly, he left them with the promise to repeat his call as often as he could conveniently do so.

He kept his promise, and hardly a week passed that he and Herbert did not spend the better portion of a day in hunting. It proved a delightful relaxation, fully as beneficial to the boy as to the man, for the latter knew the proneness of childhood to neglect the laws of health especially when interested in some new and absorbing theme.

Fairly started on the road, Herbert soon found it pleasant traveling. There was a frankness about his instructor which he admired, and Mr. Brandon was unquestionably one of the best qualified lawyers of his day. It was indeed a fortunate thing for our young friend that brought him under the charge of this wise and good man.

When a boy begins right, he is not apt to go wrong. Let him obey the admonitions of his parents, and the teachings of his instructor, and the path of duty will soon lose its ruggedness and difficulty, and he will see no pleasure in doing anything except that which is right. Let him form habits of study, and they are like seed sown upon a good ground—they will surely spring up and bear fruit.

The two succeeding years of Herbert Bingham's life were devoted to hard study, and he made substantial progress. Mr. Brandon advised him to pursue his miscellaneous reading under the direction of his mother, and he furnished him with all the books he could read.

At the end of these two years, Herbert entered upon the study of law proper. Never did he forget that beautiful summer morning when the corpulent Mr. Brandon arose from his huge arm-chair, took down a large volume from the upper part of his library, and placing it in his hands, said, with his genial, winning smile:

"There, my dear boy, to-day you begin your career. May God make it a noble one, over which you can look with unalloyed pleasure when you come to lie upon your death-bed."



There was an earnestness in the good man's manner which affected Herbert deeply, and as he raised his eyes and looked into his face, and endeavored to form words of acknowledgment, he faltered, and the big tears rolled down his cheeks.

During these same two years Riverton doubled its population, and among the new-comers was another who professed law. He was a young man who was just beginning the practice, yet his manner was such as to give the impression that he had been familiar with it for a score of years at least, although he was barely twenty-one years of age. He was thin, wiry-framed, with a simpering expression upon his face, which made him rather popular with a certain class of people found in every community.

Totally unscrupulous and unprincipled, Hugh Skakle was just the man to find plenty to do in a growing community, and it was not long before he had his hands full. In the first encounter with Mr. Brandon, this flippant young sprig had given out that he intended to "lay out the old fellow." Instead of that, however, the wrathful old gentleman, after submitting to his impertinence for a long time, launched a volley at his head which left him cowering and vanquished, although not slain.

Such people, sad to say, are not slain so easily, and he soon revived, and became as impudent and active as ever.

"Let him rage," was the philosophic reflection of Mr. Brandon, "I am training up a youngster that will take the winds out of his sails, or I am greatly mistaken."

But a cloud was about to break over Herbert Bingham's head, of which neither he nor any one else dreamed!

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## CHAPTER XI.

**A SEVERE AFFLICTION—HUGH STRAKLE AGAIN—THE FIRST CASE—DEFEAT.**

It was when Herbert Bingham had studied law somewhat over a year, that he was called upon to bear the greatest affliction which had yet come to him. In the middle of cold Winter his father was taken sick, and despite the best attention, he gradually sank, and at the end of a week quietly went home to his reward.

This was a great blow to Herbert and his mother, and for a time the plans of the farmer were entirely broken up; but, after the body was committed to its mother earth, and mother and son met in the sad, still house for consultation, it was agreed that Herbert should continue his studies with Mr. Brandon, keeping at the same time, with the assistance of his mother, a general oversight of the mill and place.

Since the rapid emigration had set in, the property of Mr. Bingham had become very valuable. Settlers had gathered around them until the little knot of houses had taken upon themselves the proportions of a goodly-sized settlement, and it had been given the name of Binghamton, in honor of its founder. The mill ran as constantly as ever, as the demands were still as impossible to meet. A new one had been erected near Riverton, but neither of them were able to answer the continual calls made upon them.

So Herbert continued his studies the same as before. He had now reached the full stature of manhood, although he still lacked a year of his majority. Mr. Brandon carefully trained him in the principles of his profession, impressing him by precept and example that the road to greatness and success lay in honesty, perseverance and a conscientious fulfillment of every trust placed in his hands.



Hugh Strakle had built up quite a practice for himself, and was undoubtedly making money fast, and approaching at the same time with equal celerity the point for which he had aimed when starting out in his profession. It is a lamentable fact that no matter how unscrupulous a lawyer may be, he is sure to find plenty to do, while the truly honest and great man is frequently compelled to wait long years before he can thrust his sickle into the harvest.

At last Herbert reached that memorable period in his life when he was admitted to practice, and, with strange emotions, he walked slowly down the main street in River-  
erton, reflecting upon the new future which had opened before him. He was twenty-one years of age, and was now a partner with the distinguished and high minded lawyer, John R. Brandon. Now, his life-work was begun.

He was interrupted in the midst of his meditations by a slap upon his shoulder, and a shock that nearly lifted him from his feet.

"I say, my friend, let me congratulate you!"

Turning round, he encountered the thin, smiling face of Hugh Strakle, who added:

"I understand you passed quite a good examination—quite good; you will permit me, therefore, to congratulate you."

"Thank you," replied Herbert, somewhat embarrassed at the overwhelming manner of his brother lawyer, who, up to this time, had displayed very little interest in his welfare.

"The examination, I understand, didn't amount to much, Bingham," added Strakle, in his same patronizing manner.

"I thought it quite rigid and searching."

"Of course; what candidate doesn't? They don't do these things as they ought to in Ohio. You ought to have seen my examination in Pennsylvania—took the better part of a week to get through with me."

"Mr. Brandon was admitted in Pennsylvania, and he told me yesterday, at the close of my examination, that



they had been more thorough and searching with me than they were with him in that State."

"I have no doubt of it—not in the least; but, that was a good many years ago you see. That accounts for Brandon having been admitted; it was always a puzzle to me how such a man got through. If he should undertake it now, he would fail utterly."

"Mr. Brandon has the reputation of a first class lawyer," replied Herbert, quite indignant at the impertinent manner in which his friend was referred to. Strakle indulged in one of those quiet, sarcastic laughs, which often express far more than any words can.

"I don't blame you—I don't blame you," added the full-fledged lawyer; "I like to see attitude, but, my dear boy, you ought to understand matters. It has been my fortune to encounter Brandon in court several times"—

"I think your first case was in a suit in which you appeared against him."

"Yes," replied Strakle, a little confused at the mention of this affair in which he had suffered such an ignominious defeat. "Once or twice we have been associated in cases, and I have known him long enough to form a tolerably correct opinion of him."

"You have had the opportunity certainly."

"Undoubtedly; I understand the man's calibre; there is little danger of his ever setting the world on fire."

"Allow me to say, Mr. Strakle, that your opinion and mine decidedly differ on this question."

"Oh! yes, I expect that as a matter of course," was the reply of the young lawyer, as he stroked the small goatee upon his chin. "I expect that, as you are young yet—and allow me to say, without intending to hurt your feelings, that you are decidedly verdant—I think rather more than I was at your time of life."

"It may possibly be that I am, but if I must change my opinion of Mr. Brandon to become otherwise, I prefer to remain verdant all through my life."

Mr. Strakle indulged in a heartier laugh than ever, and



then slid into one of the figures which he had used fully a score of times during the last few weeks.

"A man cannot fall asleep and keep up with the present age; he must have his wits about him in this nineteenth century. The West is the great field for genius; there, under the blue skies of heaven, and among the virgin wilds, must the highest life of civilization be attained."

"That is quite an impressive figure," said Herbert, disposed to become satirical himself, "but don't you think it is about worn out."

"What do you mean by that, sir?"

"I have heard you make this observation three separate times in our lyceum, and I was informed that you had used the same original remark once or twice in your speeches around the country."

Hugh Strakle hardly knew what to say to this; and, after a moment's silence, he concluded to say nothing.

"Where are you going to put out your shingle?"

"I think I shall remain in the office with Mr. Brandon; he has given me a very good opportunity, and I should prefer to spend the first year under his eye."

"It will ruin you, Bingham, ruin you, just as sure as you live; you'd better cut loose from that old foggy, who won't touch a case unless he is sure he can make his part square with what he calls his conscience. Fudge! the idea! Have no patience with it."

Herbert was in great danger of losing his temper. Turning round, so as to face his companion, he said:

"Understand, once for all, Mr. Strakle, that I will not hear my friend talked of in that manner."

"What'll you do about it?" was the impertinent demand of the lawyer, thrusting his thumbs in the armholes of his vest, and assuming a mock tragic attitude.

"You utter another word, and I will show you what I will do," was the reply of Herbert, who was growing pale with anger.

"You will, eh? Perhaps——Ah! you'd better go."

At this juncture, Herbert's arm was taken from behind,



and he was led forcibly several steps before he saw that it was Mr. Brandon who was doing it.

"There is one thing which I see you have not learned," said the old gentleman, "you cannot control your temper, and you will make sorry work in your profession so long as you are unable to do that."

"But to hear him sneer at you was more than I could bear."

"After this, understand I will take my own part, no matter how violently assailed, and please do not become my champion before I ask you."

They walked slowly on to the office, into which Herbert entered, while Mr. Brandon excused himself on the plea of business. The young man had not been left alone five minutes, when the door was suddenly opened, and an honest looking farmer stepped within, and, staring round the room, asked:

"Be you the lawyer?"

"Yes, sir," replied Herbert, with some feeling of pride, as he saw his first case before him.

"Can you do something for me?"

"That depends upon what it happens to be."

"Just look at that, will you?" said the settler, thrusting a paper into his hand.

Herbert examined it, and saw that it was a promissory note of a hundred dollars, payable on demand, drawn up legally, and properly signed.

"Well, what do you want done?"

"That hundred dollars is for a colt I sold Josiah Tompkins, and I want him to pay it."

"Is he a man of means?"

"Mighty mean—the horse is worth two hundred dollars, every cent of it."

"Has he property?"

"Certainly—one of the richest men within ten miles. I want to put it in your hands, and I want you to make him pay it. I will give you half of it, if you will get it of him."



"I don't do that kind of business. I shall charge you a regular fee whether I succeed or not."

"But you ain't a going to fail?" asked the countryman in some alarm.

"I have no fear of it."

"How soon can you get it?"

"The case can be tried next week; does Mr. Tompkins know you are going to sue him?"

"Yes; he has got that scamp of a lawyer named Strakle to help him; but I reckon you're purty near as smart as he is."

A thrill ran through Herbert at the thought that his first case was to bring him in collision with the man whom he despised so heartily, and he could not suppress a feeling of exultation at the manner in which he was going to vanquish him. How anxious he felt for the day of trial to come, and how carefully he prepared himself.

The day did come at last, and the court-room was thronged with the scores drawn thither by the knowledge that Strakle and Bingham were to appear against each other. The latter was well and favorably known, but both parties had their friends, who were quite anxious to see the result, especially as it was known that the two young men, from the force of circumstances, were the rivals of each other.

Herbert, appearing for the plaintiff, opened the case. He had conned his remarks so thoroughly, that he had them all by heart. He represented his client as a poor, honest, worthy man, struggling hard to support his family, pitting with a favorite horse, at one half his value, in order to meet his pressing wants, and only demanding that a written promise to pay should be fulfilled. Mr. Tompkins was a man of means, abundantly able to buy a hundred such horses; but whether able or not, the moral obligations remained the same. He had incurred an honest debt, and he had nothing to do but to pay it.

Such was the substance of what the lawyer said in his maiden speech at the bar, rather too eloquently to please



entirely Mr. Brandon, who sat in the room, a deeply interested spectator of the proceeding.

Mr. Strakle rose to reply. He was deeply impressed with the eloquence of his young friend; he might safely say that he was overwhelmed. Patrick Henry, and Otis, and Demosthenes could not be compared to him. A truly great light had appeared—a light whose rays were destined to illuminate the whole country. And when he reflected that this light came out of the woods—away out of the backwoods—the thought was astounding. “The gentlemen of the jury would excuse him, but”——

And here Mr. Strakle, with mock emotion, took out his handkerchief and wiped his eyes, while nearly every one in the room was in a broad grin, excepting Herbert, who felt like flying at his tormentor, and tearing him to pieces.

“And to think this is all about a note—a hundred dollar note,” continued Mr. Strakle in the same strain, “it is too much—oo much. “But,” he added, apparently rallying by a great effort, “my client, Mr. Tompkins, did give the note—he doesn’t deny it—he is an honorable gentleman”——

“Then, why don’t he pay it?” demanded Herbert, excitedly.

“For the *simple reason that he has paid it, and I hold in my hand the receipt in full, signed by Mr. Abram Eastman himself!*”

“It is a forgery!” called out Herbert, in great excitement.

The judge quieted the court, reached his hand for the paper, read it, and then asked Eastman whether that was his handwriting.

“Yes, sir,” *“I gave him that receipt; but the colt turned out a better horse than I expected, and I thought he could afford to pay it over again!”*

The court-room burst into one general roar, while Herbert Bingham wished that the earth might open and swallow him; and in the midst of his intense chagrin, Mr. Brandon pressed forward, and said:



"Served you right, Herbert; you ought to have known better!"

## CHAPTER XII.

THE ADVANTAGES OF DEFEAT—THE WISDOM OF AGE—ELECTION TO STATE LEGISLATURE—IN CONGRESS—ONWARD AND UPWARD—CONCLUSION.

The ignominious defeat which Herbert Bingham suffered at the hands of Hugh Strakle, was one of the most fortunate things which could have happened to him. It did more to take the romance and childish air-castles out of his head, than two years of "lecturing" from his instructor. He was inexpressibly chagrined, not only at the ridiculous rout to which he had been put, but at the ridiculous figure he had cut in losing his temper.

Worst of all, Mr. Brandon informed him that it was his private opinion, (which, of course, he would express in no other one's presence), that he had made a complete fool of himself, and committed a most serious blunder. It was a bitter lesson, but it was the fire by which the gold was to be refined, and he pressed down the surging emotions, and went to work harder than ever.

A few weeks later, Bingham and Strakle again appeared against each other in court, and as heretofore, quite a number of spectators were present. Strakle tried his old game of tantalizing his opponent, but our hero was too self-possessed to suffer any discomposure, and he returned a few quiet thrusts, which cut as cleanly and sharply as stilettoes. Mr. Brandon had enunciated it as a rule of his professional life to avoid personalities, but he didn't seem particularly displeased when his pupil made several capital retorts—some of them so truthful and well-winged, that even Mr. Strakle himself winced.

The result of the trial was a success upon the part of Herbert, who took his triumph very quietly. Mr. Bran-



don did not even refer to the matter until about a week after, when he remarked casually that the young lawyer did pretty well. The old gentleman was evidently determined that his pupil should not be spoiled by too much praise.

From this time forward there was no lack of business for the lawyers in Riverton. The place had assumed the dimensions of a large town, and there was abundant and remunerative work for Brandon & Bingham, and also for Hugh Strakle.

The latter never found the occasion to repeat the triumph which he had gained over his young rival at the beginning of his career as a lawyer. Herbert never forgot the lesson, and there can be but little doubt that it was the best thing which could have befallen him at that time.

As the years increased, Mr. Brandon gradually shifted his load upon the shoulders of his vigorous partner, who grew and strengthened from the additional labor required at his hands. The advice and counsel of the experienced lawyer was invaluable; but he saw that Herbert Bingham was developing into a man who would speedily become a great power in the West.

Our hero had been in practice but a few years when he was offered the nomination for the State Legislature. It was a great compliment, and he was strongly tempted; but, at the earnest advice of Mr. Brandon, he declined the honor.

"There's plenty of time, Herbert," said he, "don't let your ambition run away with your discretion. The greed for office is the ruination of many a talented young man. If you were elected, no doubt you would commit some blunder which would take more years to set right than did your performance with Strakle on the horse question."

Five years later, however, when the nomination was again offered Herbert, he accepted it, being urged thereto by Mr. Brandon. The opposite party, as the best they could do, placed at the head of their ticket the name of Hugh Strakle, and the contest was begun. The candidates traveled from one end of the district to the other, and each did all the work possible. Strakle resorted to



the low rickety to which the politician descends, but in the end he was defeated, and Herbert Bingham took his seat in the Legislature, with a handsome majority of the votes cast.

Herbert grew rapidly into a statesman and orator. His habits of study, and the admirable instruction he had received, had stored his mind with most valuable knowledge, and best of all, with pure principles. He had a fine, musical voice, and there were no speakers in the honorable body which commanded more attention than he.

He was re-elected three successive times to the Legislature, when he declined another nomination, as the business at home imperatively demanded his attendance. But the next year, most unexpectedly to himself, he was nominated for Congress. He was so surprised at the honor, that he was at a loss whether to decline or accept. His first impulse was to accept, but grave doubts arose in his mind, and in accordance with his invariable custom at such times, he went to his mother and to Mr. Brandon.

The old lady was reading her Bible when her son came to her with the question. She did not tell him that she had heard of it before him, but such being the fact, she was prepared with her reply.

"I think, as it seems to be the wish of the people, that I would take it. You are too old to be led astray by the temptations which beset public men more than any one else, and I cannot see any reason why you should decline, when another such opportunity may never come to you again. But do not decide until you have consulted Mr. Brandon."

Herbert kissed his mother as he passed on, and shortly after he was in the office of his instructor, and had laid the question before him.

"Accept it, my dear boy—accept it by all means. There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, &c. The tide has now come and you must take it at its flood. Accept it without delay, throw your whole heart into it, and work with the consciousness that you haven't a single vote to spare."



"I will do it," replied Herbert, and then and there he sat down and wrote his acceptance of the nomination which had been tendered him, doing it as briefly as possible, and pledging his whole strength and all honorable means toward attaining success.

The opposition did not nominate their candidate until the succeeding month, so that Herbert was given until then to arrange his business matters so as to give himself all the opportunity he wished to plunge body and soul into the canvas.

Finally the candidate appeared in the shape of our old acquaintance, Hugh Strakle, who had toiled night and day to get the nomination. He had made every pledge asked of him, and there was little doubt but that he would make a formidable competitor.

A week or two succeeding the nominations, Herbert was sitting in the office conversing with Mr. Brandon, and taking his advice as to what course he should pursue in the campaign upon which he was about to enter, when our hero abruptly asked him:

"Have you seen the papers this week? I suppose the nomination will be in each."

"Yes; I received both this morning and you are there," he replied, as he took the "Bugle of Liberty" from his hat, and deliberately opened it, with a significant smile.

"I believe there is a paragraph which has some reference to you. You may read it for yourself."

No man yet ever picked up a newspaper which he suspected contained a mention of his name, without a peculiar interest, and Herbert had never scanned the columns of the "Bugle" with half the attention he now did.

It was indeed there, double-leaded. At the top of the editorial column, in large letters, was the name of Hugh Strakle, the people's nomination for Congress. Then followed a long article, in which this aspirant was praised to the very skies.

He was a patriot, a statesman, an orator, destined to rank as one of the very first in the Union, a self-sacrificing, public-spirited man, who was the friend of the day laborer



and mechanic, and one who would reflect the highest honor upon the district he represented, and for whom no patriotic, intelligent man could refuse to work and vote, and the article ended with the prophecy that he could be elected by an overwhelming majority.

The next article was headed, "The Nominee of the Opposition," and after giving a succinct account of the convention, and his nomination, proceeded to say:

"We as public journalists, having the dearest interests of the people at heart, are often compelled to perform duties so painful, that we would gladly shrink from them, could we do so without compromising our conscience. Actuated by these motives, we proceed to show our friends the man who has been placed before them as the nominee of the opposition, and who has the effrontery to expect he has the slightest chance against our own noble candidate.

"Herbert Bingham, if he received his deserts, would now be serving out a term in the State Prison. While a member of our Legislature, it is well known that no bill could expect his advocacy until the honorable gentleman had received his price, and we have good reason to believe that after accepting a bribe from one party, he turned and betrayed it to the other, for the reason that he was paid a higher price.

"And this is the nominee of the opposition.

"Herbert Bingham is a dissolute, unprincipled man, whose early dissipations and immorality, it is generally believed, hastened the death of his father. The succeeding years, which should have brought remorse and reformation, has only confirmed the unfortunate man in his excesses and crimes.

"The descent of this man is such that no good can be expected from him. His father was a Tory during the Revolution, and his grandfather, Orestis Z. Bingham, was a deserter, who was shot during the French War. An uncle of the Congressional candidate was hung some years ago in Kentucky for horse stealing. Another uncle was drummed out of General Wayne's army for drunkenness.



and cowardice, and an only brother of our opponent is now serving out a term in the Pennsylvania State Prison for counterfeiting. Fortunately, Mr. Bing am, has no other brother, else we should have the painful duty of recording some heinous crime of him.

"And this is the nominee of the opposition.

"It is an insult to the intelligence and virtue of our citizens that such a man as this, who should be hiding himself in obscurity for very shame, should be thrus before them. Let us all give such a reproof to these shameless wretches that they will never recover from it. Indeed, we know that this will be done, and the opposition will learn one thing: Henceforth, when they enter a political campaign, let them do so with respectable men as their standard bearers, and not with those who should be convicts in our State Prison."



## CHAPTER XII.

Herbert read this extraordinary article from beginning to end, and when he laid the paper down, he was in a towering passion.

"The scoundrel! I'll make him suffer for that!" he exclaimed, as he excitedly paced the floor.

"Rather forcible, isn't it?" said Mr. Bingham, speaking as though he saw nothing particularly objectionable.

"Forcible! it is scandalous; it is outrageous! I'll catch that editor within an inch of his life, and then I'll prosecute him for libel!"——

"Tut, tut," interrupted Mr. Brandon, "not so fast; this is one of the penalties of prominence. It won't hurt you."

Herbert stopped short and faced his friend.

"Do you see what it says? It speaks of my grandfather being shot as a deserter, when he was killed at the siege of Quebec, and father served under Washington all through the Revolution. And then it says my conduct hastened his death; that is too much!"

And the tears coursed down his cheeks at the recollection of the terrible words.

"Rather hard I admit, but take it philosophically. Those who know you, know it is a lie, and those who are unacquainted with you, understand that it is gotten up for political effect. Depend upon it, it won't hurt you."

"And then it speaks of an uncle being hung, and another drummed out of the army, when neither father or mother ever had a brother, while I am accused of having a brother convicted of counterfeiting!"——



Herbert stopped to laugh at the ludicrous assertions, and he added :

“Good heavens ! who ever heard of such a thing ! Where did he get all this extraordinary information from ?”

“From the father of all inventions, perhaps assisted somewhat by Mr. Strakle.”

“It can't be that Hugh would descend to such villainy as that !”

“It is just like him, and you must make up your mind to encounter a good deal more of it before the campaign is over. You have an unprincipled man to deal with, but you have right and justice on your side, and, I believe, will triumph over him.”

“But this editor has laid himself open to prosecution,” replied Herbert, who was hardly prepared as yet to take the matter as coolly as his aged friend ; “there are distinct charges made which are libelous in character, and which I am sure would secure his conviction before any jury in the country.”

Mr. Brandon shook his head.

“Very unlikely ; these are election times, and due allowance must be made for the natural excitement which prevails. If it went against the editor, he could make his correction after he had done all the mischief possible. Furthermore, you are just about to enter with the campaign, and you have no time to undertake any such business as this. Besides, if you feel particularly sore about what you have just read, you can now look at the other side of the question.”

Mr. Brandon handed his young friend the last number of the “Sentinel of Freedom,” and pointed to its leading editorial.

A perusal of this could not fail to produce a smile ; for it was almost the same as the one he had just read, except that the names were reversed.

Bingham there read that Hugh Strakle was a vile, unprincipled creature, and that as long as he trod the earth



unmolested, just so long was the gallows cheated of its due.

He had committed numberless crimes, and was a being who no respectable man would receive into his society. It demanded that Christian, right thinking people should rise in their majesty, and indignantly resent the insult which had thus been forced upon them.

But Mr. Herbert Bingham! ah! Noble, high-minded, conscientious, patriotic, statesmanlike, self-sacrificing, universally beloved—these were a few of the modifiers that were strung through a column, and which seemed inadequate to express the editor's gushing admiration for his beloved candidate.

Bingham blushed crimson as he read this fulsome flattery of himself. Disgust took the place of indignation, and turning to Mr. Brandon, he said:

"One of these papers is an unconscionable liar."

"I think both are," was the truthful reply.

"You are right; I would as lief be denounced as a villain and swindler, as to be praised in that outrageous style. I doubt whether either editor has ever seen me, or whether he ever heard of me before I came up for office."

A half hour later, Bingham was walking meditatively homeward, when he encountered Strakle on the street. They had met several times since their nomination, and there was always the appearance of cordiality and friendship between them. In fact, Bingham felt no enmity at all towards his competitor, and was glad to meet him as a personal friend.

They chatted awhile, and then Strakle suddenly drew the "Bugle" from his pocket.

"By the way, Bingham, here is a rich article, that I have just read. I call that rather rough."

And he pointed to the editorial which so severely denounced his rival. Bingham looked at it a few moments, and then handed it back, with a remark that he had seen it before.



"Severe, ain't it? I think if I was pitched into in that style I would withdraw from the canvass in disgust."

"Do you really think you would, now?"

"Indeed I would."

Without another word, Bingham drew the "Sentinel of Freedom" from his pocket and handed it to him. Strakle nervously opened it, and his eyes quickly lit upon the article which referred to him. He ran rapidly through it, and then thrusting it back, fairly shouted, as he dashed away:

**"I'll cane that villain of an editor till he can't stand!"**



Sure enough, he encountered the offending individual shortly afterward, and administered a chastisement, which was, perhaps, not undeserved.

However, he did not withdraw from the contest, but entered into it harder than ever.

This canvass was one of the most exciting which ever took place in the West. Great public questions were involved, and Hubert Bingham worked as he had never toiled before. Hugh Strakle did the same, and he was no insignificant opponent. He was a good speaker, lavish with his money and promises, and he had numerous friends, who could not have toiled more faithfully. He frequently followed Hubert in his speeches, and often undid all his work.

Bingham felt grave doubts of his own success, but when the votes were counted, it was found that he had over a thousand majority, the largest by far which the district had ever given any candidate. It was not natural for him to be otherwise than exultant and highly pleased over his success; and, when a few days afterwards, he met Strakle in the street, he was strongly tempted to ask him his opinion of the "light which had risen in the back woods," but such a course would have been unmanly, and he cast the thought aside with scorn.

"It was a fair, stand-up fight," said Strakle, "and you beat me out and out. My only feeling is not for myself individually, but at the triumph of your cause. Its principles, I am sure, will ruin our beloved country within five years at farthest."

The same characteristics which gave Hubert Bingham a reputation in his State legislature brought him into notice among the greater minds of his country. "There were giants in those days" in the halls of Congress, but even among those he soon made himself known and felt.

On one occasion, near the close of the session, when a most exciting question was before Congress, and the galleries were packed to suffocation, Hubert arose in his seat. Almost immediately everything was hushed—that is, as



nearly as it can be in such a body—and unconsciously he raised his eyes to the galleries. As he did so, he saw the grey head of Mr. Brandon, who was leaning forward, as if to catch every syllable he uttered, while, within ten feet of him, each unconscious of the other's presence, stood Hugh Strakle, equally intent upon what was to be said.

The sight inspired him, and on that day and at that time he delivered the most eloquent and soul-stirring speech which had ever fallen from his lips. The applause was overwhelming, and the gallery seemed to be swept by a whirlwind of emotion. In the midst of the wildest excitement, and when the enthusiasm had passed all bounds, Mr. Brandon, forgetful of the time and place, was seen to spring from his seat, throw up his hands, and those nearest heard him shout:

“THAT’S MY BOY! THAT’S MY BOY! GOD BLESS HIM!”

His actions were unnoticed except by a few who were in his immediate vicinity, and he was hardly conscious of them himself. He waited outside for his friend, knowing that the pressure around him would be so great that it would be impossible to get within reach of his hand. As soon as Hubert caught a glimpse of the old man he hastened to him, and drawing his arm within his own, took him off to his own house.

“You did quite well, Hubert; I think I may safely tell you that I felt proud of you; but don’t let your success turn your head; the more successful, the more careful you must be.”

There was one who was as deeply interested in the career of Hubert Bingham as was Mr. Brandon, although that person never listened to one of his efforts. It was his mother, who felt all the natural pride of a mother’s heart in the success of her son. She followed him with her prayers, and thanked God that the blandishments of triumph were not able to rob him of his truthfulness, temperance, and Christian principle.

When Hubert Bingham resigned his seat in Congress, a number of years later, it was to assume the gubernatorial



chair of his native State. This was the office which he desired more than any other, and the immense majority which placed it in his hands was certainly complimentary in the highest degree.

At the dinner given the Governor-elect by the citizens of Riverton, at the conclusion of a reply to a toast, Governor Bingham said:

"Whatever success, under the blessing of heaven, I have met with in public life is attributable to the instruction of two persons. The furthest recollection to which memory can carry me is when I knelt at my mother's knee, and lisped the prayer of childhood; the first lessons—those which remain by a man through his life-time—came from her; and you who know what a noble mother still lives to bless and cheer me, understand the holy nature of these teachings. My youth and early manhood were spent under the guidance of my venerable friend on my right, to whom, more than any man on the broad earth, I owe a debt of gratitude, which can never be paid. Let any youth be persevering, honest, conscientious, considerate, and determined, and his course must ever be **ONWARD AND UPWARD.**"

---

**THE END.**



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